"Elsie she ain't one bit sp'iled—"

Memorial Edition

The Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley

IN TEN VOLUMES

Including Poems and Prose Sketches, many of which have not heretofore been published; an authentic Biography, an elaborate Index and numerous Illustrations in color from Paintings by Howard Chandler Christy and Ethel Franklin Betts

VOLUME VIII

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The Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley

THE EDGE OF THE WIND

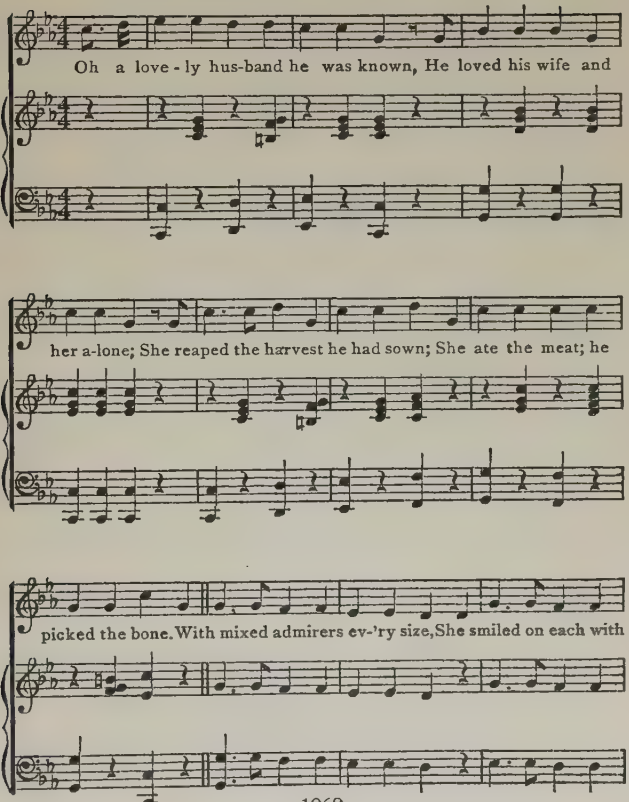
YE stars in ye skies seem twinkling
In icicles of light,
And ye edge of ye wind cuts keener
Than ever ye sword-edge might;
Ye footsteps crunch in ye courtway,
And ye trough and ye cask go "ping!"—
Ye china cracks in ye pantry,
And ye crickets cease to sing.

THE HIRED MAN'S FAITH IN CHILDREN

I BELIEVE *all* childern's good,
Ef they're only *understood,*—
Even *bad* ones, 'pears to me,
'S jes' as good as they kin be!

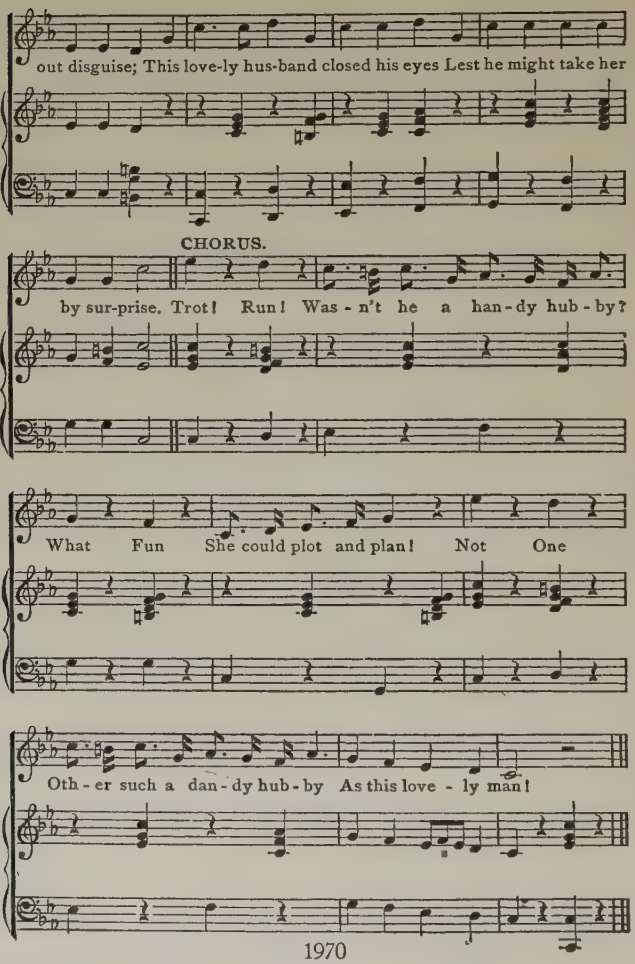
1968

THE LOVELY HUSBAND


Oh a love - ly hus-band he was known, He loved his wife and
her a-lone; She reaped the harvest he had sown; She ate the meat; he
picked the bone. With mixed admirers ev-'ry size, She smiled on each with

1969

THE LOVELY HUSBAND


out disguise; This love-ly hus-band closed his eyes Lest he might take her
CHORUS.
by sur-prise. Trot! Run! Was-n't he a han-dy hub-by?
What Fun She could plot and plan! Not One
Oth-er such a dan-dy hub-by As this love-ly man!

II

He answered at her least command:
He fanned her, if she would be fanned;
He vanished when she willed it.—And
He always coughed behind his hand.
She held him in such high esteem
She let him dope her face with
"Cream,"—
He'd chink the wrinkles seam-by-seam,
And call her "lovely as a dream!"

CHORUS

Hot
Bun!
Wasn't he a lovey-dovey?
What
Fun
She could plot and plan!
Not
One
Other such a dovey-lovey
As this love-ly man!

III

Her lightest wishes he foreknew
And fell up-stairs to cater to:
He never failed to back from view,
Nor mispronounced *Don't* ( ) *you* "Doan chu."

He only sought to fill such space
As her friends left;—he knew his place:—
He praised the form she could not lace.—
He praised her face before her face!

CHORUS

Shot
Gun!
Wasn't he a lovely fellow?
What
Fun
She could plot and plan!
Not
One
Lonesome little streak of yellow
In this love-ly man!

THREE SEVERAL BIRDS

The Romancer, the Poet, and the Bookman

I

THE ROMANCER

THE Romancer's a nightingale,—
The moon wanes dewy-dim
And all the stars grow faint and pale
In listening to him.—
To him the plot least plausible
Is of the most avail,—
He simply masters it because
He takes it by the tale.

O he's a nightingale,—
His theme will never fail—
It gains applause of all—because
He takes it by the tale!

The Romancer's a nightingale:—
His is the sweetest note—
The sweetest, woe-begonest wail
Poured out of mortal throat:

So, glad or sad, he ever draws
Our best godspeed and hail;
He highest lifts his theme—because
He takes it by the tale.

O he's a nightingale,—
His theme will never fail—
It gains applause of all—because
He takes it by the tale!

II

THE POET

The bobolink he sings a single song,
Right along,—
And the robin sings another, all his own—
One alone;
And the whippoorwill, and bluebird,
And the cockadoodle-doo-bird;—
But the mocking-bird he sings in every tone
Ever known,
Or chirrup-note of merriment or moan.

So the Poet he's the mocking-bird of men,—
He steals his songs and sings them o'er again;
And yet beyond believing
They're the sweeter for his thieving.—
So we'll howl for Mister Mocking-bird
And have him out again!

It's mighty fond we are of bobolinks,
And chewinks;
And we dote on dinky robins, quite a few—
Yes, we do;
And we love the dove, and bluebird,
And the cockadoodle-doo-bird,—
But the mocking-bird's the bird for me and you,
Through and through,
Since he sings as everybody wants him to.

Ho! the Poet he's the mocking-bird of men,—
He steals his songs and sings them o'er again;
And yet beyond believing
They're the sweeter for his thieving.—
So we'll howl for Mister Mocking-bird
And have him out again!

III

BOOKMAN'S CATCH

The Bookman he's a humming-bird—
His feasts are honey-fine,—
(With hi! hilloo!
And clover-dew
And roses lush and rare!)
His roses are the phrase and word
Of olden tomes divine;
(With hi! and ho!
And pinks ablow
And posies everywhere!)

The Bookman he's a humming-bird,—
  He steals from song to song—
He scents the ripest-blooming rhyme,
  And takes his heart along
And sacks all sweets of bursting verse
  And ballads, throng on throng.
    (With ho! and hey!
    And brook and brae,
  And brinks of shade and shine!)

A humming-bird the Bookman is—
  Though cumbrous, gray and grim,—
    (With hi! hilloo!
    And honey-dew
  And odors musty-rare!)
He bends him o'er that page of his
  As o'er the rose's rim
    (With hi! and ho!
    And pinks aglow
  And roses everywhere!)
Ay, he's the featest humming-bird,—
  On airiest of wings
He poises pendent o'er the poem
  That blossoms as it sings—
God friend him as he dips his beak
  In such delicious things!
    (With ho! and hey!
    And world away
  And only dreams for him!)

THE BED

I

"THOU, of all God's gifts the best,
Blessèd Bed!" I muse, and rest
Thinking how it havened me
In my dazèd Infancy—
Ere mine eyes could bear the kind
Daylight through the window-blind,
Or my lips, in yearning quest,
Groping found the mother-breast,
Or mine utterance but owned
Minor sounds that sobbed and moaned.

II

Gracious Bed that nestled me
Even ere the mother's knee,—
Lulling me to slumber ere
Conscious of my treasure there—
Save the tiny palms that kept
Fondling, even as I slept,
That rare dual-wealth of mine,—
Softest pillow—sweetest wine!—
Gentlest cheer for mortal guest,
And of Love's fare lordliest.

III

By thy grace, O Bed, the first
Blooms of Boyhood-memories burst:—
Dreams of riches, swift withdrawn
As I, wakening, find the dawn
With its glad Spring-face once more
Glimmering on me as of yore:
Then the bluebird's limpid cry
Lulls me like a lullaby,
Till falls every failing sense
Back to sleep's sheer impotence.

IV

Or, a truant, home again,—
With the moonlight through the pane,
And the kiss that ends the prayer—
Then the footsteps down the stair;
And the close hush; and far click
Of the old clock; and the thick
Sweetness of the locust-bloom
Drugging all the enchanted room
Into darkness fathoms deep
As mine own pure childish sleep.

V

Gift and spell, O Bed, retell
Every lovely miracle—
Up from childhood's simplest dream
Unto manhood's pride supreme!—

Sacredness no words express,—
Lo, the young wife's fond caress
Of her first-born, while beside
Bends the husband, tearful-eyed,
Marveling of kiss and prayer
Which of these is holier there.

VI

Trace the vigils through the long,
Long nights, when the cricket's song
Stunned the sick man's fevered brain,
As he tossed and moaned in pain
Piteous—till thou, O Bed,
Smoothed the pillows for his head,
And thy soothest solace laid
Round him, and his fever weighed
Into slumber deep and cool,
And divinely merciful.

VII

Thus, O Bed, all gratefully
I would ever sing of thee—
Till the final sleep shall fall
O'er me, and the crickets call
In the grasses where at last
I am indolently cast
Like a play-worn boy at will.—
'Tis a Bed befriends me still—
Yea, and Bed, belike, the best,
Softest, safest, blessèdest.

HOME-FOLKS

HOME-FOLKS!—Well, that-air name, to me,
Sounds jis the same as *poetry*—
That is, ef poetry is jis
As sweet as I've hearn tell it is!

Home-Folks—they're jis the same as *kin*—
All brung up, same as *we* have bin,
Without no overpowerin' sense
Of their oncommon consequence!

They've bin to school, but not to git
The habit fastened on 'em yit
So as to ever interfere
With *other* work 'at's waitin' here:

Home-Folks has crops to plant and plow,
Er lives in town and keeps a cow;
But whether country-jakes er town-,
They know when eggs is up er down!

La! can't you *spot* 'em—when you meet
'Em *anywheres*—in field er street?
And can't you see their faces, bright
As circus-day, heave into sight?

1980

"Home folks! — well, that-air name, to me,
Sounds jis the same as *poetry*"

And can't you hear their "Howdy!" clear
As a brook's chuckle to the ear,
And allus find their laughin' eyes
As fresh and clear as morning skies?

And can't you—when they've gone away—
Jis feel 'em shakin' hands, all day?
And feel, too, you've bin higher raised
By sich a meetin'?—God be praised!

Oh, Home-Folks! you're the best of all
'At ranges this terreschul ball,—
But, north er south, er east er west,
It's home is where you're at your best.—

It's home—it's home your faces shine,
In-nunder your own fig and vine—
Your fambly and your neighbers 'bout
Ye, and the latch-string hangin' out.

. . . . . .

Home-Folks—*at home,*—I know o' one
Old feller now 'at hain't got none.—
Invite him—he may hold back some—
But *you* invite him, and he'll come.

AMERICA'S THANKSGIVING

1900

FATHER all bountiful, in mercy bear
With this our universal voice of prayer—
The voice that needs must be
Upraised in thanks to Thee,
O Father, from Thy children everywhere.

A multitudinous voice, wherein we fain
Wouldst have Thee hear no lightest sob of pain—
No murmur of distress,
Nor moan of loneliness,
Nor drip of tears, though soft as summer rain.

And, Father, give us first to comprehend,
No ill can come from Thee; lean Thou and lend
Us clearer sight to see
Our boundless debt to Thee,
Since all thy deeds are blessings, in the end.

And let us feel and know that, being Thine,
We are inheritors of hearts divine,
And hands endowed with skill,
And strength to work Thy will,
And fashion to fulfilment Thy design.

1982

So, let us thank Thee, with all self aside,
Nor any lingering taint of mortal pride;
As here to Thee we dare
Uplift our faltering prayer,
Lend it some fervor of the glorified.

We thank Thee that our land is loved of Thee
The blessèd home of thrift and industry,
With ever-open door
Of welcome to the poor—
Thy shielding hand o'er all abidingly.

Even thus we thank Thee for the wrong that grew
Into a right that heroes battled to,
With brothers long estranged,
Once more as brothers ranged
Beneath the red and white and starry blue.

Ay, thanks—though tremulous the thanks
expressed—
Thanks for the battle at its worst, and best—
For all the clanging fray
Whose discord dies away
Into a pastoral song of peace and rest.

TO EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

THE AUTHORS' CLUB RECEPTION, NEW YORK, DECEMBER 6, 1900

IT is a various tribute you command,
O Poet-seer and World-sage in one!—
The scholar greets you; and the student; and
The stoic—and his visionary son:
The painter, harvesting with quiet eye
Your features; and the sculptor, dreaming, too,
A classic marble figure, lifted high
Where Fame's immortal ones are waiting you.

The man of letters, with his wistful face;
The grizzled scientist; the young A.B.;
The true historian, of force and grace;
The orator, of pure simplicity;
The journalist—the editor, likewise;
The young war-correspondent; and the old
War-seasoned general, with sagging eyes,
And nerve and hand of steel, and heart of gold.

The serious humorist; the blithe divine;
The lawyer, with that twinkling look he wears;
The bleak-faced man in the dramatic line;
The social lion—and the bulls and bears;

These—these, and more, O favored guest of all,
  Have known your benefactions, and are led
To pay their worldly homage, and to call
  Down Heaven's blessings on your honored head.

Ideal, to the utmost plea of art—
  As real, to labor's most exacting need,—
Your dual services of soul and heart
  Enrich the world alike in dream and deed:
For you have brought to us, from out the mine
  Delved but by genius in scholastic soil,
The blended treasures of a wealth divine,—
  Your peerless gift of song—your life of toil.

WHEN WE FIRST PLAYED "SHOW"

WASN'T it a good time,
Long Time Ago—
When we all were little tads
And first played "Show"!—
When every newer day
Wore as bright a glow
As the ones we laughed away—
Long Time Ago!

Calf was in the back-lot;
Clover in the red;
Bluebird in the pear tree;
Pigeons on the shed;
Tom a-chargin' twenty pins
At the barn; and Dan
Spraddled out just like "The
'Injarubber'-Man!"

Me and Bub and Rusty,
Eck and Dunk and Sid,
'Tumblin' on the sawdust
Like the A-rabs did;

Jamesy on the slack-rope
In a wild retreat,
Grappling back, to start again—
When he chalked his feet!

Wasn't Eck a wonder,
In his stocking-tights?
Wasn't Dunk—his leaping lion—
Chief of all delights?
Yes, and wasn't "Little Mack"
Boss of all the Show,—
Both Old Clown and Candy-Butcher—
Long Time Ago!

Sid the Bareback-Rider;
And—oh-me-oh-*my!*—
Bub, the spruce Ring-Master,
Stepping round so spry!—
In his little waist-and-trousers
All made in one,
Was there a prouder youngster
Under the sun!

And NOW—who will tell me,—
Where are they all?
Dunk's a sanatorium doctor,
Up at Waterfall;
Sid's a city street-contractor;
Tom has fifty clerks;
And Jamesy he's the "Iron Magnate"
Of "The Hecla Works."

And Bub's old and bald now,
Yet still he hangs on,—
Dan and Eck and "Little Mack,"
Long, long gone!
But wasn't it a good time,
Long Time Ago—
When we all were little tads
And first played "Show"!

WILLIAM PINKNEY FISHBACK

SAY first he loved the dear home-hearts, and then
He loved his honest fellow citizen—
He loved and honored him, in any post
Of duty where he served mankind the most.

All that he asked of him in humblest need
Was but to find him striving to succeed;
All that he asked of him in highest place
Was justice to the lowliest of his race.

When he found these conditions, proved and tried,
He owned he marveled, but was satisfied—
Relaxed in vigilance enough to smile
And, with his own wit, flay himself a while.

Often he liked real anger—as, perchance,
The summer skies like storm-clouds and the glance
Of lightning—for the clearer, purer blue
Of heaven, and the greener old earth, too.

All easy things to do he did with care,
Knowing the very common danger there;
In noblest conquest of supreme debate
The facts are simple as the victory great.

1989

That which had been a task to hardiest minds
To him was as a pleasure, such as finds
The captive-truant, doomed to read throughout
The one lone book he really cares about.

Study revived him: Howsoever dim
And deep the problem, 'twas a joy to him
To solve it wholly; and he seemed as one
Refreshed and rested as the work was done.

And he had gathered, from all wealth of lore
That time has written, such a treasure-store,
His mind held opulence—his speech the rare
Fair grace of sharing all his riches there—

Sharing with all, but with the greatest zest
Sharing with those who seemed the neediest;
The young he ever favored; and through these
Shall he live longest in men's memories.

A GOOD MAN

I

A GOOD man never dies—
In worthy deed and prayer
And helpful hands, and honest eyes,
If smiles or tears be there:
Who lives for you and me—
Lives for the world he tries
To help—he lives eternally.
A good man never dies.

II

Who lives to bravely take
His share of toil and stress,
And, for his weaker fellows' sake,
Makes every burden less,—
He may, at last, seem worn—
Lie fallen—hands and eyes
Folded—yet, though we mourn and mourn,
A good man never dies.

JOHN CLARK RIDPATH

TO the lorn ones who loved him first and best,
And knew his dear love at its tenderest,
We seem akin—we simplest friends who knew
His fellowship, of heart and spirit too:

We who have known the happy summertide
Of his ingenuous nature, glorified
With the inspiring smile that ever lit
The earnest face and kindly strength of it:

His presence, all-commanding, as his thought
Into unconscious eloquence was wrought
Until the utterance became a spell
That awed us as a spoken miracle.

Learning, to him was native—was, in truth,
The earliest playmate of his lisping youth,
Likewise throughout a life of toil and stress,
It was as laughter, health and happiness:

And so he played with it—joyed at its call—
Ran rioting with it, forgetting all
Delights of childhood, and of age and fame,—
A devotee of learning, still the same!

In fancy, even now we catch the glance
Of the rapt eye and radiant countenance,
As when his discourse, like a woodland's stream,
Flowed musically on from theme to theme:

The skies, the stars, the mountains and the sea,
He worshiped as their high divinity—
Nor did his reverent spirit find one thing
On earth too lowly for his worshiping.

The weed, the rose, the wildwood or the plain,
The teeming harvest, or the blighted grain,—
All—all were fashioned beautiful and good,
As the soul saw and senses understood.

Thus broadly based, his spacious faith and love
Enfolded all below as all above—
Nay, ev'n if overmuch he loved mankind,
He gave his love's vast largess as designed.

Therefore, in fondest, faithful service, he
Wrought ever bravely for humanity—
Stood, first of heroes for the Right allied—
Foes, even, grieving, when (for them) he died.

This was the man we loved—are loving yet,
And still shall love while longing eyes are wet
With selfish tears that well were brushed away,
Remembering his smile of yesterday.—

For, even as we knew him, smiling still,
Somewhere beyond all earthly ache or ill,
He waits with the old welcome—just as when
We met him smiling, we shall meet again.

HIS HEART OF CONSTANT YOUTH

And I never hear the drums beat
that I do not think of him.
—MAJOR CHARLES L. HOLSTEIN

TURN through his life, each word and deed
Now sacred as it is—
How helped and soothed we are to read
A history like his!

To turn the years, in far review,
And find him—as To-day—
In orchard-lands of bloom and dew
Again a boy at play:

The jeweled grass—the sumptuous trees
And flower and fragrance there,
With song of birds and drone of bees
And Spring-time everywhere:

Turn any chapter that we will,
Read any page, in sooth,
We find his glad heart owning still
The freshness of his youth.

1994

With such a heart of tender care
He loved his own, and thus
His home was, to the loved ones there,
A temple glorious.

And, ever youthful, still his love
Enshrined, all manifold,
The people—all the poor thereof,
The helpless and the old.

And little children—Ah! to them
His love was as the sun
Wrought in a magic diadem
That crowned them, every one.

And ever young his reverence for
The laws: like morning-dew
He shone as counsel, orator,
And clear logician, too.

And, as a boy, his gallant soul
Made answer to the trill
Of battle-trumpet and the roll
Of drums that echo still:

His comrades—as his country, dear—
They knew, and ever knew
That buoyant, boyish love, sincere
As truth itself is true:

He marched with them, in tireless tramp—
  Laughed, cheered and lifted up
The battle-chorus, and in camp
  Shared blanket, pipe and cup.

His comrades! . . . When you meet again,
  In anguish though you bow,
Remember how he loved you then,
  And how he loves you *now*.

THE PATHS OF PEACE

MAURICE THOMPSON—FEBRUARY 15, 1901

HE would have holiday—outworn, in sooth,
Would turn again to seek the old release,—
The open fields—the loved haunts of his youth—
The woods, the waters, and the paths of peace.

The rest—the recreation he would choose
Be his abidingly! Long has he served
And greatly—ay, and greatly let us use
Our grief, and yield him nobly as deserved.

Perchance—with subtler senses than our own
And love exceeding ours—he listens thus
To ever nearer, clearer pipings blown
From out the lost lands of Theocritus.

Or haply, he is beckoned from us here,
By knight or yeoman of the bosky wood,
Or, chained in roses, haled a prisoner
Before the blithe Immortal, Robin Hood.

Or, mayhap, Chaucer signals, and with him
And his rare fellows he goes pilgriming;
Or Walton signs him, o'er the morning brim
Of misty waters midst the dales of Spring.

Ho! wheresoe'er he goes, or whosoe'er
He fares with, he has bravely earned the boon.
Be his the open, and the glory there
Of April-buds, May-blooms and flowers of June!

Be his the glittering dawn, the twinkling dew,
The breathless pool or gush of laughing streams—
Be his the triumph of the coming true
Of all his loveliest dreams!

THE TRIBUTE OF HIS HOME

BENJAMIN HARRISON—INDIANAPOLIS, MARCH 14, 1901

BOWED, midst a universal grief that makes
Columbia's self a stricken mourner, cast
In tears beneath the old Flag at half-mast,
A sense of glory rouses us and breaks
Like song upon our sorrowing and shakes
The dew from our drenched eyes, that smile at last
In childish pride—as though the great man passed
To his most high reward for our poor sakes.
Loved of all men—we muse,—yet ours he was—
Choice of the Nation's mighty brotherhood—
Her soldier, statesman, ruler.—Ay, but then,
We knew him—long before the world's applause
And after—as a neighbor, kind and good,
Our common friend and fellow citizen.

AMERICA

BUFFALO, NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 14, 1901

O Thou, America—Messiah of Nations!

I

IN the need that bows us thus,
America!
Shape a mighty song for us—
America!
Song to whelm a hundred years'
Roar of wars and rain of tears
'Neath a world's triumphant cheers:
America! America!

II

Lift the trumpet to thy mouth,
America!
East and West and North and South—
America!
Call us round the dazzling shrine
Of the starry old ensign—
New baptized in blood of thine,
America! America!

III

Dying eyes through pitying mists,
America!
See the Assassin's shackled wrists,
America!
Patient eyes that turn their sight
From all blackening crime and blight
Still toward Heaven's holy light—
America! America!

IV

High o'erlooking sea and land,
America!
Trustfully with outheld hand,
America!
Thou dost welcome all in quest
Of thy freedom, peace and rest—
Every exile is thy guest,
America! America!

V

Thine a universal love,
America!
Thine the cross and crown thereof,
America!
Aid us, then, to sing thy worth:
God hath builded, from thy birth,
The first nation of the earth—
America! America!

EVEN AS A CHILD

CANTON, SEPTEMBER 19, 1901

EVEN as a child to whom sad neighbors speak
In symbol, saying that his father "sleeps"—
Who feels their meaning, even as his cheek
Feels the first tear-drop as it stings and leaps—
Who keenly knows his loss, and yet denies
Its awful import—grieves unreconciled,
Moans, drowses—rouses, with new-drowning eyes—
Even as a child.

Even as a child; with empty, aimless hand
Clasped sudden to the heart all hope deserts—
With tears that blur all lights on sea or land—
The lip that quivers and the throat that hurts:
Even so, the Nation that has known his love
Is orphaned now; and, whelmed in anguish wild
Knows but its sorrow and the ache thereof,
Even as a child.

THE HOOSIER IN EXILE

THE Hoosier in Exile—a toast
That by its very sound
Moves us, at first, to tears almost,
And sympathy profound;
But musing for a little space,
We lift the glass and smile,
And poise it with a royal grace—
The Hoosier in Exile!

The Hoosier in Exile, forsooth!
For though his steps may roam
The earth's remotest bounds, in truth
His heart is ever home!
O loyal still to every tie
Of native fields and streams,
His boyhood friends, and paths whereby
He finds them in his dreams!

Though he may fare the thronging maze
Of alien city streets,
His thoughts are set in grassy ways
And woodlands' cool retreats;

Forever, clear and sweet above
The traffic's roar and din,
In breezy groves he hears the dove,
And is at peace within.

When newer friends and generous hands
Advance him, he returns
Due gratefulness, yet, pausing, stands
As one who strangely yearns
To pay still further thanks, but sighs
To think he knows not where,
Till—like as life—with misty eyes
He sees his mother there.

The Hoosier in Exile? Ah, well,
Accept the phrase, but know
The Hoosier heart must ever dwell
Where orchard blossoms grow
The whitest, apples reddest, and,
In cornlands, mile on mile,
The old homesteads forever stand—
"The Hoosier in Exile!"

THE QUEST OF THE FATHERS

WHAT were our Forefathers trying to find
When they weighed anchor, that desperate hour
They turned from home, and the warning wind
Sighed in the sails of the old Mayflower?
What sought they that could compensate
Their hearts for the loved ones left behind—
The household group at the glowing grate?—
What were our Forefathers trying to find?

What were they trying to find more dear
Than their native land and its annals old,—
Its throne—its church—and its worldly cheer—
Its princely state, and its hoarded gold?
What more dear than the mounds of green
There o'er the brave sires, slumbering long?
What more fair than the rural scene—
What more sweet than the throstle's song?

Faces pallid, but sternly set,
Lips locked close, as in voiceless prayer,
And eyes with never a tear-drop wet—
Even the tenderest woman's there!

But O the light from the soul within,
  As each spake each with a flashing mind—
As the lightning speaks to its kith and kin!
  What were our Forefathers trying to find?

Argonauts of a godless day—
  Seers of visions, and dreamers vain!
Their ship's foot set in a pathless way,—
  The fogs, the mists, and the blinding rain!—
When the gleam of sun, and moon and star
  Seemed lost so long they were half forgot—
When the fixed eyes found nor near nor far,
  And the night whelmed all, and the world was not.

And yet, befriended in some strange wise,
  They groped their way in the storm and stress
Through which—though their look found not the skies—
  The Lord's look found *them* ne'ertheless—
Found them, yea, in their piteous lot,
  As they in their faith from the first divined—
Found them, and favored them—too. But what—
  What were our Forefathers trying to find?

Numb and agasp, with the frost for breath,
  They came on a frozen shore, at last,
As bleak and drear as the coasts of death,—
  And yet their psalm o'er the wintry blast
Rang glad as though 'twere the chiming mirth
  Of jubilant children landing there—
Until o'er all of the icy earth
  The snows seemed warm, as they knelt in prayer.

For, lo! they were close on the trail they sought:—
In the sacred soil of the rights of men
They marked where the Master-hand had wrought;
And there they garnered and sowed again.—
Their land—then *ours,* as to-day it is,
With its flag of heaven's own light designed,
And God's vast love o'er all. . . . And *this*
Is what our Forefathers were trying to find.

TO THE MOTHER

THE mother-hands no further toil may know;
The mother-eyes smile not on you and me;
The mother-heart is stilled, alas!—But O
The mother-love abides eternally.

NEW YEAR'S NURSERY JINGLE

OF all the rhymes of all the climes
Of where and when and how,
We best and most can boost and boast
The Golden Age of NOW!

2009

FOOL-YOUNGENS

ME an' Bert an' Minnie-Belle
Knows a joke, an' we won't tell!
No, we don't—'cause we don't know
Why we got to laughin' so;
But we got to laughin' so,
We ist kep' a-laughin'.

Wind uz blowin' in the tree—
An' wuz only ist us three
Playin' there; an' ever' one
Ketched each other, like we done,
Squintin' up there at the sun
Like we wuz a-laughin'.

Nothin' funny anyway;
But I laughed, an' so did they—
An' we all three laughed, an' nen
Squint' our eyes an' laugh' again:
Ner we didn't ist *p'ten'*—
We wuz *shore-'nough* laughin'.

We ist laugh' an' laugh', tel Bert
Say he *can't* quit an' it hurt.
Nen I *howl,* an' Minnie-Belle

She tear up the grass a spell
An' ist stop her yeers an' *yell*
Like she'd *die* a-laughin'.

Never sich fool-youngens yit!
Nothin' funny,—not a bit!—
But we laugh' so, tel we whoop'
Purt' nigh like we have the croup—
All so hoarse we'd wheeze an' whoop
An' ist *choke* a-laughin'.

A GUSTATORY ACHIEVEMENT

LAST Thanksgivin'-dinner we
Et at Granny's house, an' she
Had—ist like she alluz does—
Most an' best pies ever wuz.

Canned *black*burry-pie an' *goose-*
Burry, squshin'-full o' juice;
An' *roz*burry—yes, an' plum—
Yes, an' *churry*-pie—*um-yum!*

Peach an' punkin, too, you bet.
Lawzy! I kin taste 'em yet!
Yes, an' *custard*-pie, an' *mince!*

. . . . . .

An'—I—*ain't*—et—no—pie—since!

BILLY AND HIS DRUM

HO! it's come, kids, come!
With a bim! bam! bum!
Here's little Billy bangin' on his
big bass drum!
He's a-marchin' round the room,
With his feather-duster plume
A-noddin' an' a-bobbin' with his
bim! bom! boom!

Looky, little Jane an' Jim!
Will you only look at him,
A-humpin' an' a-thumpin' with his
bam! bom! bim!
Has the Day o' Judgment come
Er the New Mi-len-nee-um?
Er is it only Billy with his
bim! bam! bum!

I'm a-comin'; yes, I am—
Jim an' Sis, an' Jane an' Sam!
We'll all march off with Billy an' his
bom! bim! bam!

Come hur*raw*in' as you come,
Er they'll think you're deef-an'-dumb
Ef you don't hear little Billy an' his
big bass drum!

A DIVERTED TRAGEDY

GRACIE wuz allus a *careless* tot;
But Gracie dearly loved her doll,
An' played wiv it on the winder-sill
'Way up-stairs, when she ought to *not,*
An' her muvver *telled* her so an' all;
But she won't *mind* what *she* say—till,
First thing she know, her dolly fall
Clean spang out o' the winder, plumb
Into the street! An' here Grace come
Down-stairs, two at a time, ist wild
An' a-screamin', "Oh, my child! my child!"

Jule wuz a-bringin' their basket o' clo'es
Ist then into their hall down there,—
An' she ist stop' when Gracie bawl,
An' Jule she say "She ist declare
She's ist in time!" An' what you s'pose?
She sets her basket down in the hall,
An' wite on top o' the snowy clo'es
Wuz Gracie's dolly a-layin' there
An' ist ain't bu'st ner hurt a-tall!
Nen Gracie smiled—ist *sobbed* an' smiled—
An' cried, "My child! my precious child!"

THOMAS THE PRETENDER

TOMMY'S alluz playin' jokes,
An' actin' up, an' foolin' folks;
An' wunst one time he creep
In Pa's big chair, he did, one night,
An' squint an' shut his eyes bofe tight,
An' say, "Now I'm asleep."
An' nen we knowed, an' Ma know' too,
He *ain't* asleep no more'n you!

An' wunst he clumbed on our back-fence
An' flop his arms an' nen commence
To crow, like he's a hen;
But when he falled off, like he done,
He didn't fool us childern none,
Ner didn't *crow* again.
An' our Hired Man, as he come by,
Says, "Tom can't *crow,* but he kin *cry.*"

An' one time wunst Tom 'tend'-like he's
His Pa an' goin' to rob the bees;
An', first he know—oh, dear!
They ist come swarmin' out o' there

An' sting him, an' stick in his hair—
An' one got in his yeer!—
An' Uncle sigh an' say to Ma,
An' grease the welts, "Pore Pa! pore Pa!"

TO MY SISTER

A BELATED OFFERING FOR HER BIRTHDAY

THESE books you find three weeks behind
Your honored anniversary
Make me, I fear, to here appear
Mayhap a trifle cursory.—
Yet while the Muse must thus refuse
The chords that fall caressfully,
She seems to stir the publisher
And dealer quite successfully.

As to our *birthdays*—let 'em run
Until they whir and whiz!
Read Robert Louis Stevenson,
And hum these lines of his:—
"The eternal dawn, beyond a doubt,
Shall break on hill and plain
And put all stars and candles out
Ere we be young again."

2018

THE SOLDIER

THE DEDICATION OF THE SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' MONUMENT, INDIANAPOLIS, MAY 15, 1902

THE Soldier!—meek the title, yet divine:
  Therefore, with reverence, as with wild acclaim,
We fain would honor in exalted line
  The glorious lineage of the glorious name:
The Soldier.—Lo, he ever was and is,
  Our Country's high custodian, by right
Of patriot blood that brims that heart of his
  With fiercest love, yet honor infinite.

The Soldier—within whose inviolate care
  The Nation takes repose,—her inmost fane
Of Freedom ever has its guardian there,
  As have her forts and fleets on land and main:
The Heavenward Banner, as its ripples stream
  In happy winds, or float in languid flow,
Through silken meshes ever sifts the gleam
  Of sunshine on its Sentinel below.

The Soldier!—Why, the very utterance
Is music—as of rallying bugles, blent
With blur of drums and cymbals and the chants
Of battle-hymns that shake the continent!—
The thunder-chorus of a world is stirred
To awful, universal jubilee,—
Yet ever through it, pure and sweet, are heard
The prayers of Womanhood, and Infancy.

Even as a fateful tempest sudden loosed
Upon our senses, so our thoughts are blown
Back where The Soldier battled, nor refused
A grave all nameless in a clime unknown.—
The Soldier—though, perchance, worn, old and gray;
The Soldier—though, perchance, the merest lad,—
The Soldier—though he gave his life away,
Hearing the shout of "Victory," was glad;

Ay, glad and grateful, that in such a cause
His veins were drained at Freedom's holy shrine—
Rechristening the land—as first it was,—
His blood poured thus in sacramental sign
Of new baptism of the hallowed name
"My Country"—now on every lip once more
And blest of God with still enduring fame.—
This thought even then The Soldier gloried o'er.

The dying eyes upraised in rapture there,—
  As, haply, he remembered how a breeze
Once swept his boyish brow and tossed his hair,
  Under the fresh bloom of the orchard-trees—
When his heart hurried, in some wistful haste
  Of ecstasy, and his quick breath was wild
And balmy-sharp and chilly-sweet to taste,—
  And he towered godlike, though a trembling
    child!

Again, through luminous mists, he saw the skies'
  Far fields white-tented; and in gray and blue
And dazzling gold, he saw vast armies rise
  And fuse in fire—from which, in swiftest view,
The Old Flag soared, and friend and foe as one
  Blent in an instant's vivid mirage. . . . Then
The eyes closed smiling on the smiling sun
  That changed the seer to a child again.—

And, even so, The Soldier slept.—Our own!—
  The Soldier of our plaudits, flowers and
    tears,—
O this memorial of bronze and stone—
  His love shall outlast *this* a thousand years!
Yet, as the towering symbol bids us do,—
  With soul saluting, as salutes the hand,
We answer as The Soldier answered to
  The Captain's high command.

A CHRISTMAS GLEE

FEIGNED AS FROM ELIZABETHAN COMEDY

I

WITH a hey! and a hi! and a hey-ho glee!
O a Christmas glass for a sweet-lipped lass
To kiss and pass, in her coquetry—
So rare!
And the lads all flush save the right one there—
So rare—so rare!
With a hey! and a hi! and a ho—oh!
The Christmas holly and the mistletoe!

II

With a hey! and a hi! and a hey-ho wile!
As he lifts the cup and his wan face up,
Her eyes touch his with a tender smile—
So rare!
Then his hands grasp out—and her own are there—
So rare—so rare!
With a hey! and a hi! and a ho—oh!
The Christmas holly and the mistletoe!

CHORUS

With a hey! and a hi! and a hey-ho-ho!
The wind, the winter and the drifting snow!
With a hey! and a hi! and a ho—oh!
The Christmas holly and the mistletoe!

NO BOY KNOWS

THERE are many things that boys may
know—
Why this and that are thus and so,—
Who made the world in the dark and lit
The great sun up to lighten it:
Boys know new things every day—
When they study, or when they play,—
When they idle, or sow and reap—
But no boy knows when he goes to sleep.

Boys who listen—or should, at least,—
May know that the round old earth rolls East;—
And know that the ice and the snow and the
rain—
Ever repeating their parts again—
Are all just water the sunbeams first
Sip from the earth in their endless thirst,
And pour again till the low streams leap.—
But no boy knows when he goes to sleep.

A boy may know what a long, glad while
It has been to him since the dawn's first smile,
When forth he fared in the realm divine
Of brook-laced woodland and spun-sunshine;—

He may know each call of his truant mates,
And the paths they went,—and the pasture-gates
Of the 'cross-lots home through the dusk so
deep.—
But no boy knows when he goes to sleep.

O I have followed me, o'er and o'er,
From the flagrant drowse on the parlor-floor,
To the pleading voice of the mother when
I even doubted I heard it then—
To the sense of a kiss, and a moonlit room,
And dewy odors of locust-bloom—
A sweet white cot—and a cricket's cheep.—
But no boy knows when he goes to sleep.

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

ALL 'at I ever want to be
Is ist to be a man like Pa
When he wuz young an' married Ma!
Uncle he telled us yisterdy
Ist all about it then—'cause they,
My Pa an' Ma, wuz bofe away
To 'tend P'tracted Meetin', where
My Pa an' Ma is allus there
When all the big "Revivals" is,
An' "Love-Feasts," too, an' "Class," an'
"Prayer,"
An' when's "Comoonian Servicis."
An', yes, an' Uncle said to not
To never tell *them* ner let on
Like we knowed now ist how they got
First married. So—while they wuz gone—
Uncle he telled us ever'thing—
'Bout how my Pa wuz ist a pore
Farm-boy.—He says, I tell you *what*,
Your Pa *wuz* pore! But neighbers they
All liked him—all but one old man
An' his old wife that folks all say
Nobody liked, ner never can!

Yes, sir! an' Uncle purt' nigh swore
About the mean old man an' way
He treat' my Pa!—'cause he's a pore
Farm-hand—but prouder 'an a king—
An' ist work' on, he did, an' wore
His old patched clo'es, ist anyway,
So he saved up his wages—then
He ist worked on an 'saved some more,
An' ist worked on, ist night an' day—
Till, sir, he save' up nine er ten
Er hunnerd dollars! But he keep
All still about it, Uncle say—
But he ist thinks—an' thinks a heap!
Though what he wuz a-thinkin', Pa
He never tell' a soul but Ma—
(Then, course, you know, he wuzn't Pa,
An', course, you know, she wuzn't Ma—
They wuz ist sweethearts, course you know);
'Cause Ma wuz ist a girl, about
Sixteen; an' when my Pa he go
A-courtin' her, her Pa an' Ma—
The very first they find it out—
Wuz maddest folks you ever saw!
'Cause it wuz her old Ma an' Pa
'At hate' my Pa, an' toss their head,
An' ist raise Ned! An' her Pa said
He'd ruther see his daughter dead!
An' said she's ist a child!—an' so
Wuz Pa!—An' ef he wuz man-grown
An' only man on earth below,
His daughter shouldn't marry him

Ef he's a king an' on his throne!
Pa's chances then looked mighty slim
Fer certain, Uncle said. But he—
He never told a soul but her
What he wuz keepin' quiet fer.
Her folks ist lived a mile from where
He lived at—an' they drove past there
To git to town. An' ever' one
An' all the neighbers they liked her
An' showed it! But her folks—no, sir!—
Nobody liked her parunts none!
An' so when they shet down, you know,
On Pa—an' old man tell' him so—
Pa ist went back to work, an' she
Ist waited. An', sir! purty soon
Her folks they thought he's turned his eye
Some other way—'cause by-an'-by
They heard he'd *rented* the old place
He worked on. An' one afternoon
A neighber, that had bust' a trace,
He tell' the old man they wuz signs
Around the old place that the young
Man wuz a-fixin' up the old
Log cabin some, an' he had brung
New furnichur from town; an' told
How th' old house 'uz whitewashed clean
An' sweet wiv morning-glory vines
An' hollyhawks all 'round the door
An' winders—an' a bran'-new floor
In th' old porch—an' wite-new green-
An'-red pump in the old sweep-well!

An', Uncle said, when he hear tell
O' all them things, the old man he
Ist grin' an' says, he "reckon' now
Some gal, er widder anyhow,
That silly boy he's coaxed at last
To marry him!" he says, says-ee,
"An' ef he has, 'so mote it be'!"
Then went back to the house to tell
His *wife* the news, as he went past
The smokehouse, an' then went on in
The kitchen, where his daughter she
Wuz washin', to tell *her,* an' grin
An' try to worry her a spell!
The mean old thing! But Uncle said
She ain't cry much—ist pull her old
Sunbonnet forrerds on her head—
So's old man he can't see her face
At all! An' when he s'pose he scold
An' jaw enough, he ist clear' out
An' think he's boss of all the place!

Then Uncle say, the first you know
They's go' to be a Circus-show
In town; an' old man think he'll take
His wife an' go. An' when she say
To take their daughter, too, *she* shake
Her head like she don't *want* to go;
An' when he sees she wants to stay,
The old man takes her, anyway!
An' so she went! But Uncle he
Said she looked mighty sweet that day,

Though she wuz pale as she could be,
A-speshully a-drivin' by
Wite where her beau lived at, you know;
But out the corner of his eye
The old man watch' her; but she throw
Her pairsol 'round so she can't see
The house at all! An' then she hear
Her Pa an' Ma a-talkin' low
An' kind o' laughin'-like; but she
Ist set there in the seat behind,
P'tendin' like she didn't mind.
An', Uncle say, when they got past
The young man's place, an' 'pearantly
He wuzn't home, but off an' gone
To town, the old man turned at last
An' talked back to his daughter there,
All pleasant-like, from then clean on
Till they got into town, an' where
The Circus wuz, an' on inside
O' that, an' through the crowd, on to
The very top seat in the tent
Wite next the band—a-bangin' through
A tune 'at bu'st his yeers in two!
An' there the old man scrouged an' tried
To make his wife set down, an' she
A-yellin'! But ist what she meant
He couldn't hear, ner couldn't see
Till she turned 'round an' pinted. Then
He turned an' looked—an' looked again! . . .
He ist saw neighbers ever'where—
But, sir, *his daughter* wuzn't there!

'An', Uncle says, he even saw
Her beau, you know, he hated so;
An' he wuz with some other girl.
An' then he heard the Clown "Haw-haw!"
An' saw the horses wheel an' whirl
Around the ring, an' heard the zipp
O' the Ringmaster's long slim whip—
But that whole Circus, Uncle said,
Wuz all inside the old man's head!

An' Uncle said, he didn't find
His daughter all that afternoon—
An' her Ma says she'll lose her mind
Ef they don't find her purty soon!
But, though they looked all day, an' stayed
There fer the night p'formance—not
No use at all!—they never laid
Their eyes on her. An' then they got
Their team out, an' the old man shook
His fist at all the town, an' then
Shook it up at the moon ag'in,
An' said his time 'ud come, some day!
An' jerked the lines an' driv away.

Uncle, he said, he s'pect, that night,
The old man's madder yet when they
Drive past the young man's place, an' hear
A fiddle thère, an' see a light
Inside, an' shadders light an' gay
A-dancin' 'crosst the winder-blinds.
An' some young chaps outside yelled, "Say!
What 'pears to be the hurry—hey?"

But the old man ist whipped the lines
An' streaked past like a runaway!
An' now you'll be su'prised, I bet!—
I hardly ain't quit laughin' yet
When Uncle say, that jamboree
An' dance an' all—w'y, that's a sign
That any old man ort to see,
As plain as 8 and 1 makes 9,
That they's *a weddin'* wite inside
That very house he's whippin' so
To git apast!—An', sir! the bride
There's his own daughter! Yes, an' oh!
She's my Ma now—an' young man she
Got married, he's my Pa! *Whoop-ee!*
But Uncle say to not laugh all
The laughin' yet, but please save some
To kind o' spice up what's to come!

Then Uncle say, about next day
The neighbers they begin to call
An' wish 'em well, an' say how glad
An' proud an' tickled ever' way
Their friends all is—an' how they had
The lovin' prayers of ever' one
That had homes of their own! But none
Said nothin' 'bout the home that she
Had run away from! So she sighed
Sometimes—an' wunst she purt' nigh cried

Well, Uncle say, her old Pa, he
Ist like to died, he wuz so mad!
An' her Ma, too! But by-an'-by
They cool down some.

An', 'bout a week,
She want to see her Ma so bad,
She think she'll haf to go! An' so
She coax him; an' he kiss her cheek
An' say, Lord bless her, *course* they'll go!
An', Uncle say, when they're bofe come
A-knockin' there at her old home—
W'y, first he know, the door it flew
Open, all quick, an' she's jerked in,
An', quicker still, the door's banged to
An' locked: an' crosst the winder-sill
The old man pokes a shotgun through
An' says to git! "You stold my child,"
He says; "an', now she's back, w'y, you
Clear out, this minute, er I'll kill
You! Yes, an' I 'ull kill her, too,
Ef you don't go!" An' then, all wild,
His young wife begs him please to go!
An' so he turn' an' walk'—all slow
An' pale as death, but awful still
An' ca'm—back to the gate, an' on
Into the road, where he had gone
So many times alone, you know!
An', Uncle say, a whipperwill
Holler so lonesome, as he go
On back to'rds home, he say he 'spec'
He ist 'ud like to wring its neck!
An' I ain't think he's goin' back
All by hisse'f—but Uncle say
That's what he does, an' it's a fac'!

An' 'pears-like he's goin' back to *stay*—
'Cause there he stick', ist thataway,
An' don't go nowheres any more,
Ner don't nobody ever see
Him set his foot outside the door—
Till 'bout five days, a boy loped down
The road, a-comin' past from town,
An' he called to him from the gate,
An' sent the old man word: He's thought
Things over now; an', while he hate
To lose his wife, he think she ought
To mind her Pa an' Ma an' do
Whatever *they* advise her to.
An' sends word, too, to come an' git
Her new things an' the furnichur
That he had special' bought fer her—
'Cause, now that they wuz goin' to quit,
She's free to ist have all of it;—
So, fer his love fer her, he say
To come an' git it, wite away.
An' *spang!* that very afternoon,
Here come her Ma—ist 'bout as soon
As old man could hitch up an' tell
Her "hurry back!" An' 'bout as quick
As she's drove there to where my Pa—
I mean to where her son-in-law—
Lives at, he meets her at the door
All smilin', though he's awful pale
An' trimbly—like he's ist been sick;
He take her in the house—An', 'fore
She knows it, they's a cellar-door

Shet on her, an' she hears the click
Of a' old rusty padlock! Then,
Uncle, he say, she kind o' stands
An' thinks—an' thinks—an' thinks ag'in—
An' mayby thinks of her own child
Locked up—like her! An' Uncle smiled,
An' I ist laughed an' clapped my hands!
An' there she stayed! An' she can cry
Ist all she want! an' yell an' kick
To ist her heart's content! an' try
To pry out wiv a quiltin'-stick!
But Uncle say he guess at last
She's 'bout give up, an' holler through
The door-crack fer to please to be
So kind an' good as send an' tell
The old man, like she want him to,
To come 'fore night, an' set her free,
Er—they wuz rats down there! An' yell
She did, till, Uncle say, it soured
The morning's milk in the back yard!
But all the answer reached her, where
She's skeered so in the dark down there,
Wuz ist a mutterin' that she heard,—
"I've sent him word!—I've sent him word!"
An' shore enough, as Uncle say,
He *has* "sent word!"

Well, it's plum night
An' all the house is shet up tight—
Only one winder 'bout half-way
Raised up, you know; an' ain't no light

Inside the whole house, Uncle say.
Then, first you know, there where the team
Stands hitched yet, there the old man
stands—
A' old tin lantern in his hands
An' monkey-wrench; an' he don't seem
To make things out, a-standin' there.
He comes on to the gate an' feels
An' fumbles fer the latch—then hears
A voice that chills him to the heels—
"You halt! an' stand right where you air!"
Then, sir! my—my—his son-in-law,
There at the winder wiv his gun,
He tell the old man what he's done:
"You hold *my* wife a prisoner—
An' *your* wife, drat ye! I've got *her!*
An' now, sir," Uncle say he say,
"You ist turn round an' climb wite in
That wagon, an' drive home ag'in
An' bring my wife back wite away,
An' we'll trade then—an' not before
Will I unlock my cellar-door—
Not fer your wife's sake ner your own,
But *my* wife's sake—an' hers alone!"
An', Uncle say, it don't sound like
It's so, but yet it is!—He say,
From wite then, somepin' seem' to strike
The old man's funny-bone some way;
An', minute more, that team o' his
Went tearin' down the road *k'whiz!*
An' in the same two-forty style

"An' the young man grab an' kiss an' hug her, till she make him quit"

Come whizzin' back! An' oh, that-air
Sweet girl a-cryin' all the while,
Thinkin' about her Ma there, shet
In her own daughter's cellar, where—
Ist week or so *she's* kep' house there—
She hadn't time to clean it yet!
So when her Pa an' her they git
There—an' the young man grab' an' kiss
An' hug her, till she make him quit
An' ask him where her mother is.
An' then he smile' an' try to not;
Then slow-like find th' old padlock key,
An' blow a' oat-hull out of it,
An' then stoop down there where he's got
Her Ma locked up so keerfully—
An' where, wite there, he say he thought
It *ort* to been *the old man*—though
Uncle, he say, he reckon not—
When out she bounced, all tickled so
To taste fresh air ag'in an' find
Her folks wunst more, an' grab' her child
An' cry an' laugh, an' even go
An' hug the old man; an' he wind
Her in his arms, an' laugh, an' pat
Her back, an' say he's riconciled,
In such a happy scene as that,
To swap his daughter for her Ma,
An' have so smart a son-in-law
As *they* had! "Yes, an' he's my Pa!"
I laugh' an' yell', "Hooray-hooraw!"

TO JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

YOU who to the rounded prime
Of a life of toil and stress,
Still have kept the morning-time
Of glad youth in heart and spirit,
So your laugh, as children hear it,
Seems their own, no less,—
Take this book of childish rhyme—
The Book of Joyous Children.

Their first happiness on earth
Here is echoed—their first glee:
Rich, in sooth, the volume's worth—
Not in classic lore, but rich in
The child-sagas of the kitchen;—
Therefore, take from me
To your heart of childish mirth
The Book of Joyous Children.

THE BOOK OF JOYOUS CHILDREN

BOUND and bordered in leaf-green,
Edged with trellised buds and flowers
And glad Summer-gold, with clean
White and purple morning-glories
Such as suit the songs and stories
Of this book of ours,
Unrevised in text or scene,—
The Book of Joyous Children.

Wild and breathless in their glee—
Lawless rangers of all ways
Winding through lush greenery
Of Elysian vales—the viny,
Bowery groves of shady, shiny
Haunts of childish days.
Spread and read again with me
The Book of Joyous Children.

What a whir of wings, and what
Sudden drench of dews upon
The young brows, wreathed, all unsought,
With the apple-blossom garlands

Of the poets of those far lands
Whence all dreams are drawn
Set herein and soiling not
The Book of Joyous Children.

In their blithe companionship
Taste again, these pages through,
The hot honey on your lip
Of the sun-smit wild strawberry,
Or the chill tart of the cherry;
Kneel, all glowing, to
The cool spring, and with it sip
The Book of Joyous Children.

As their laughter needs no rule,
So accept their language, pray.—
Touch it not with any tool:
Surely we may understand it,—
As the heart has parsed or scanned it
Is a worthy way,
Though found not in any School
The Book of Joyous Children.

Be a truant—know no place
Of prison under heaven's rim!
Front the Father's smiling face—
Smiling, that *you* smile the brighter
For the heavy hearts made lighter,
Since you smile with Him.
Take—and thank Him for His grace—
The Book of Joyous Children.

ELMER BROWN

AWF'LEST boy in this-here town
Er anywheres is Elmer Brown!
He'll mock you—yes, an' strangers, too,
An' make a face an' yell at you,—
"Here's the way *you* look!"

Yes, an' wunst in School one day,
An' Teacher's lookin' wite that way,
He helt his slate, an' hide his head,
An' maked a face at *her,* an' said,—
"Here's the way *you* look!"

An'-sir! when Rosie Wheeler smile
One morning at him 'crosst the aisle,
He twist his face all up, an' black
His nose wiv ink, an' whisper back,—
"Here's the way *you* look!"

Wunst when his Aunt's all dressed to call,
An' kiss him good-by in the hall,
An' latch the gate an' start away,
He holler out to her an' say,—
"Here's the way *you* look!"

An' when his Pa he read out loud
The speech he maked, an' feel so proud
It's in the paper—Elmer's Ma
She ketched him—wite behind his Pa,—
"Here's the way *you* look!"

Nen when his Ma she slip an' take
Him in the other room an' shake
Him good! w'y, he don't care—no-*sir!*—
He ist look up an' laugh at her,—
"Here's the way *you* look!"

THE RAMBO-TREE

WHEN Autumn shakes the rambo-tree—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—
The bird sings low as the bumblebee—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—
The poor shote-pig he says, says he:
"When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree
There's enough for you and enough for me."—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.

For just two truant lads like we,
When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree
There's enough for you and enough for me—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.

When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—
The mole digs out to peep and see—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—
The dusk sags down, and the moon swings free,
There's a far, lorn call, "Pig-*gee!* Pig-*gee!*"
And two boys—glad enough for three.—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.

For just two truant lads like we,
When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree
There's enough for you and enough for me—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.

FIND THE FAVORITE

OUR three cats is Maltese cats,
An' they's two that's white,—
An' bofe of 'em's *deef*—an' that's
'Cause their *eyes* ain't right.—

Uncle say that *Huxley* say
Eyes of *white* Maltese—
When they don't match thataway—
They're deef as you please!

Girls, they like our white cats best,
'Cause they're white as snow,
Yes, an' look the stylishest—
But they're deef, you know!

They don't know their names, an' don't
Hear us when we call
"Come in, Nick an' Finn!"—they won't
Come fer us at all!

But our *other* cat, *he* knows
Mister Nick an' Finn,—
Mowg's *his* name,—an' when *he* goes
Fer 'em, they come in!

Mowgli's *all* his name—the same
  Me an' Muvver took
Like the Wolf-Child's *other* name,
  In "The Jungul Book."

I bet Mowg's the smartest cat
  In the world!—*He's* not
White, but mousy-plush, with that
  Smoky gloss he's got!

All's got little bells to ring,
  Round their neck; but none
Only Mowg *knows* anything—
  He's the only one!

I ist 'spect sometimes he hate
  White cats' stupid ways:—
He won't hardly 'sociate
  With 'em, lots o' days!

Mowg wants in where *we* air,—well,
  He'll ist take his paw
An' ist ring an' ring his bell
  There till me er Ma

Er *some*body lets him in
  Nen an' shuts the door.—
An', when he wants out ag'in,
  Nen he'll ring some more.

Ort to hear our Katy tell!
  She sleeps 'way up-stairs;
An' last night she hear Mowg's bell
  Ringin' round *some*wheres. . . .

Trees grows by her winder.—So,
  She lean out an' see
Mowg up there, 'way out, you know,
  In the clingstone-tree;—

An'-sir! he ist *hint* an' *ring,*—
  Till she ketch an' plat
Them limbs;—nen he crawl an' spring
  In where Katy's at!

THE BOY PATRIOT

I WANT to be a Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand
Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,
Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of the band;
I want to hear, high overhead, The Old Flag flap her wings
While all the Army, following, in chorus cheers and sings;
I want to hear the tramp and jar
Of patriots a million,
As gaily dancing off to war
As dancing a cotillion.

I want to be a Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand
Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,
Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of the band.

I want to see the battle!—
The battle!—
The battle!—
I want to see the battle, and be in it to the end;—
I want to hear the cannon clear their throats and
catch the prattle
Of all the pretty compliments the enemy can send!—
And then I know my wits will go,—and where I
shouldn't be—
Well, there's the spot, in any fight, that you may
search for me.
So, when our foes have had their fill,
Though I'm among the dying,
To see The Old Flag flying still,
I'll laugh to leave her flying!

I want to be a Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand
Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,
Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of
the band.

EXTREMES

I

A LITTLE boy once played so loud
That the Thunder, up in a thunder-cloud,
Said, "Since *I* can't be heard, why, then
I'll never, never thunder again!"

II

And a little girl once kept so still
That she heard a fly on the window-sill
Whisper and say to a ladybird,—
"She's the stilliest child I ever heard."

INTELLECTUAL LIMITATIONS

PARUNTS knows lots more than us,
  But they don't know *all* things,—
'Cause we ketch 'em, lots o' times,
  Even on little small things.

One time Winnie ask' her Ma,
  At the winder, sewin',
What's the wind a-doin' when
  It's a-not a-*blowin'?*

Yes, an' 'Del', that very day,
  When we're nearly froze out,
He ask' Uncle *where* it goes
  When the fire goes out?

Nen *I* run to ask my Pa,
  That way, somepin' funny;
But I can't say ist but "Say,"
When he turn to me an' say,
  "Well, what is it, Honey?"

A MASQUE OF THE SEASONS

SCENE.—*A kitchen.—Group of Children, popping corn.—The Fairy Queen of the Seasons discovered in the smoke of the corn-popper.—Waving her wand, and, with eery, sharp, imperious ejaculations, addressing the bespelled auditors, who neither see nor hear her nor suspect her presence.*

QUEEN

SUMMER or Winter or Spring or Fall,—
Which do you like the best of all?

LITTLE JASPER

When I'm dressed warm as warm can be,
And with boots, to go
Through the deepest snow,
Winter-time is the time for me!

QUEEN

Summer or Winter or Spring or Fall,—
Which do you like the best of all?

LITTLE MILDRED

I like blossoms, and birds that sing;
The grass and the dew,
And the sunshine, too,—
So, best of all I like the Spring.

QUEEN

Summer or Winter or Spring or Fall,—
Which do you like the best of all?

LITTLE MANDEVILLE

O little friends, I most rejoice
When I hear the drums
As the Circus comes,—
So Summer-time's my special choice.

QUEEN

Summer or Winter or Spring or Fall,—
Which do you like the best of all?

LITTLE EDITH

Apples of ruby, and pears of gold,
And grapes of blue
That the bee stings through.—
Fall—it is all that my heart can hold!

QUEEN

Soh! my lovelings and pretty dears,
You've *each* a favorite, it appears,—
Summer and Winter and Spring and Fall.—
That's the reason I send them *all!*

LITTLE DICK AND THE CLOCK

WHEN Dicky was sick
In the night, and the clock,
As he listened, said "Tick-
Atty—tick-atty—tock!"
He said that *it* said,
Every time it said "Tick,"
It said "Sick," instead,
And he *heard* it say "Sick!"
And when it said "Tick-
Atty—tick-atty—tock,"
He said it said "Sick-
Atty—sick-atty—sock!"
And he tried to *see* then,
But the light was too dim,
Yet he *heard* it again—
And 'twas *talking* to him!
And then it said "Sick-
Atty—sick-atty—sick!
You poor little Dick-
Atty—Dick-atty—Dick!—
Have you got the hick-
Atties? Hi! send for Doc
To hurry up quick-

Atty—quick-atty—quock,
And heat a hot brick-
Atty—brick-atty—brock,
And rickle-ty wrap it
And clickle-ty clap it
Against his cold feet-
Al-ty—weep-aty—eepaty—
There he goes, slapit-
Ty—slippaty—sleepaty!"

THE KATYDIDS

SOMETIMES I keep
From going to sleep,
To hear the katydids "cheep-cheep!"
And think they say
Their prayers that way;
But *katydids* don't have to *pray!*

I listen when
They cheep again;
And so, I think, they're *singing* then!
But, no; I'm wrong,—
The sound's too long
And all-alike to be a song!

I think, "Well, there!
I do declare,
If it is neither song nor prayer,
It's *talk*—and quite
Too vain and light
For me to listen to all night!"

And so, I smile,
And think,—"Now I'll
Not listen for a little while!"—
Then, sweet and clear,
Next *"cheep"* I hear
'S a *kiss*. . . . Good morning,
Mommy dear!

THE NOBLE OLD ELM

O BIG Old Tree, so tall an' fine,
Where all us childern swings an' plays,
Though neighbers says you're on the line
Between Pa's house an' Mr. Gray's,—
Us childern used to almost fuss,
Old Tree, about you when we'd play.
We'd argy you belonged to *us,*
An' them Gray-kids the other way!

Till *Elsie,* one time *she* wuz here
An' playin' wiv us—Don't you mind,
Old Mister Tree?—an' purty near
She scolded us the hardest kind
Fer quar'llin' 'bout you thataway,
An' say *she'll* find—ef we'll keep still—
Whose tree you air *fer shore,* she say,
An' settle it *fer good,* she will!

So all keep still: An' nen she gone
An' pat the Old Tree, an' says she,—
"Whose *air* you, Tree?" an' nen let on
Like she's a-list'nin' to the Tree,—
An' nen she say, "It's settled,—'cause
The Old Tree says he's *all* our tree—
His *trunk* belongs to bofe your Pas,
But *shade* belongs to you an' me."

EVENSONG

LAY away the story,—
Though the theme is sweet,
There's a lack of something yet,
Leaves it incomplete:—
There's a nameless yearning—
Strangely undefined—
For a story sweeter still
Than the written kind.

Therefore read no longer—
I've no heart to hear
But just something you make up,
O my mother dear.—
With your arms around me,
Hold me, folded-eyed,—
Only let your voice go on—
I'll be satisfied.

AN IMPROMPTU FAIRY-TALE

When I wuz ist a little bit o' weenty-teenty kid
I maked up a Fairy-tale, all by myse'f, I did:—

I

WUNST upon a time wunst
They wuz a Fairy King,
An' ever'thing he have wuz *gold*—
His clo'es, an' *ever'*thing!
An' all the other Fairies
In his goldun Palace-hall
Had to hump an' hustle—
'Cause he was bosst of all!

II

He have a golden trumput,
An' when he blow' on that,
It's a sign he want' his boots,
Er his coat er hat:

They's a sign fer ever'thing,—
  An' all the Fairies knowed
Ever' sign, an' come a-hoppin'
  When the King blowed!

III

Wunst he blowed an' telled 'em all:
  "Saddle up yer bees—
Fireflies is gittin' fat
  An' sassy as you please!—
Guess we'll go a-huntin'!"
  So they hunt' a little bit,
Till the King blowed "Supper-time,"
  Nen they all quit.

IV

Nen they have a Banqut
  In the Palace-hall,
An' ist et! an' et! an' et!
  Nen they have a *Ball;*
An' when the *Queen* o' Fairyland
  Come p'omenadin' through,
The King says an' halts her,—
  "Guess I'll marry you!"

THE TWINS

"IGO AND AGO"

WE'RE The Twins from Aunt
Marinn's,
Igo and Ago.
When Dad comes, the show begins!—
Iram, coram, dago.

Dad he says he named us two
Igo and Ago
For a poem he always knew,
Iram, coram, dago.

Then he was a braw Scotchman—
Igo and Ago
Now he's Scotch-Amer-i-can.
Iram, coram, dago.

"Hey!" he cries, and pats his knee,
"Igo and Ago,
My twin bairnies, ride wi' me—
Iram, coram, dago!"

"Here," he laughs, "ye've each a leg,
Igo and Ago,
Gleg as Tam O'Shanter's 'Meg'!
Iram, coram, dago!"

Then we mount, with shrieks of mirth—
Igo and Ago,—
The two gladdest twins on earth!
Iram, coram, dago.

Wade and Silas-Walker cry,—
"Igo and Ago—
Annie's kissin' 'em 'good-by'!"—
Iram, coram, dago.

Aunty waves us fond farewells.—
"Igo and Ago,"
Granny pipes, "tak care yersels!"
Iram, coram, dago.

THE LITTLE LADY

O THE Little Lady's dainty
As the picture in a book,
And her hands are creamy-whiter
Than the water-lilies look;
Her laugh's the undrown'd music
Of the maddest meadow-brook.—
Yet all in vain I praise The Little Lady!

Her eyes are blue and dewy
As the glimmering Summer-dawn,—
Her face is like the eglantine
Before the dew is gone;
And were that honied mouth of hers
A bee's to feast upon,
He'd be a bee bewildered, Little Lady!

Her brow makes light look sallow;
And the sunshine, I declare,
Is but a yellow jealousy
Awakened by her hair—
For O the dazzling glint of it
Nor sight nor soul can bear,—
So Love goes groping for The Little Lady.

And yet she's neither Nymph nor Fay,
  Nor yet of Angelkind:—
She's but a racing schoolgirl, with
  Her hair blown out behind
And tremblingly unbraided by
  The fingers of the Wind,
As it wildly swoops upon The Little Lady.

"COMPANY MANNERS"

WHEN Bess gave her Dollies a tea, said she,—
"It's unpolite, when they's Company,
To say you've drinked *two* cups, you see,—
But say you've drinked *a couple* of tea."

THE GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED PEOPLE

WHEN we hear Uncle Sidney tell
About the long-ago
An' old, old friends he loved so well
When *he* was young—My-oh!—
Us childern all wish *we'd* 'a' bin
A-livin' then with Uncle,—so
We could a-kind o' happened in
On them old friends *he* used to know!—
The good, old-fashioned people—
The hale, hard-working people—
The kindly country people
'At Uncle used to know!

They was God's people, Uncle says,
An' gloried in His name,
An' worked, without no selfishness,
An' loved their neighbers same
As they was kin: An' when they biled
Their tree-molasses, in the Spring,
Er butchered in the Fall, they smiled
An' sheered with all jist ever'thing!—
The good, old-fashioned people—
The hale, hard-working people—
The kindly country people
'At Uncle used to know!

He tells about 'em, lots o' times,
  Till we'd all ruther hear
About 'em than the Nurs'ry Rhymes
  Er Fairies—mighty near!—
Only, sometimes, he stops so long
  An' then talks on so low an' slow,
It's purt' nigh sad as any song
  To listen to him talkin' so
    Of the good, old-fashioned people—
    The hale, hard-working people—
    The kindly country people
      'At Uncle used to know!

THE BEST TIMES

WHEN Old Folks they wuz young like us
An' little as you an' me,—
Them wuz the best times ever wuz
Er ever goin' ter be!

"HIK-TEE-DIK"

THE WAR-CRY OF BILLY AND BUDDY

WHEN two little boys—renowned but for noise—
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!—
May hurt a whole school, and the head it employs,
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!
Such loud and hilarious pupils indeed
Need learning—and yet something further they need,
Though fond hearts that love them may sorrow and bleed.
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!

O the schoolmarm was cool, and in nowise a fool;
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!
And in ruling her ranks it was *her* rule to *rule;*
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!
So when these two pupils conspired, every day,
Some mad piece of mischief, with whoop and hoo-ray,
That hurt yet defied her,—how happy were they!—
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!

At the ring of the bell they'd rush in with a yell—
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!
And they'd bang the school-door till the plastering fell,
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!
They'd clinch as they came, and pretend not to see
As they knocked her desk over—then, *My!* and *O-me!*
How awfully sorry they'd both seem to be!
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!

This trick seemed so neat and so safe a conceit,—
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!—
They played it three times—though the third they were beat;
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!
For the teacher, she righted her desk—raised the lid
And folded and packed away each little kid—
Closed the incident so—yes, and locked it, she did—
Hik-tee-dik! Billy and Buddy!

"OLD BOB WHITE"

OLD Bob White's a funny bird!—
Funniest you ever heard!—
Hear him whistle,—"Old—Bob—*White!*"
You can hear him, clean from where
He's 'way 'crosst the wheat-field there,
Whistlin' like he didn't care—
"Old—Bob—*White!*"

Whistles alluz ist the same—
So's we won't fergit his name!—
Hear him say it?—"Old—Bob—*White!*"
There! he's whizzed off down the lane—
Gone back where his folks is stayin'—
Hear him?—There he goes again,—
"Old—Bob—*White!*"

A SESSION WITH UNCLE SIDNEY

[1869]

I

ONE OF HIS ANIMAL STORIES

NOW, Tudens, you sit on *this* knee—and 'scuse
It having no side-saddle on;—and, Jeems,
You sit on *this*—and don't you wobble so
And chug my old shins with your coppertoes;—
And, all the rest of you, range round someway,—
Ride on the rockers and hang to the arms
Of our old-time split-bottom carryall!—
Do anything but *squabble* for a place,
Or push or shove or scrouge, or breathe *out loud,*
Or chew wet, or knead taffy in my beard!—
Do *any*thing almost—act *any*way,—
Only *keep still,* so I can hear myself
Trying to tell you "just one story more!"

One winter afternoon my father, with
A whistle to our dog, a shout to us—
His two boys—six and eight years old we were,—
Started off to the woods, a half a mile

From home, where he was chopping wood. We raced,
We slipped and slid; reaching, at last, the north
Side of Tharp's corn-field.—There we struck what seemed
To be a coon-track—so we all agreed:
And father, who was not a hunter, to
Our glad surprise, proposed we follow it.
The snow was quite five inches deep; and we,
Keen on the trail, were soon far in the woods.
Our old dog, "Ring," ran nosing the fresh track
With whimpering delight, far on ahead.
After following the trail more than a mile
To northward, through the thickest winter woods
We boys had ever seen,—all suddenly
He seemed to strike *another* trail; and then
Our joyful attention was drawn to
Old "Ring"—leaping to this side, then to that,
Of a big, hollow, old oak tree, which had
Been blown down by a storm some years before.
There—all at once—out leapt a lean old fox
From the black hollow of a big bent limb,—
Hey! how he scudded!—but with our old "Ring"
Sharp after him—and father after "Ring"—
We after father, near as we could hold.
And father noticed that the fox kept just
About four feet ahead of "Ring"—just *that*—
No farther, and no nearer! Then he said:—
"There are young foxes in that tree back there,
And the mother-fox is drawing 'Ring' and us
Away from their nest there!"

"Oh, le' 's go back!—
Do le' 's go back!" we little vandals cried,—
"Le' 's go back, quick, and find the little things—
Please, father!—Yes, and take 'em home for pets—
'Cause 'Ring' he'll kill the old fox anyway!"

So father turned, at last, and back we went.
And then he chopped a hole in the old tree
About ten feet along the limb from which
The old fox ran: and—Bless their little lives!—
There, in the hollow of the old tree-trunk—
There, on a bed of warm dry leaves and moss—
There, snug as any bug in any rug—
We found—one—two—three—four, and, yes-sir,
five
Wee, weenty-teenty baby-foxes, with
Their eyes just barely opened.—*Cute?*—my-oh!—
The cutest—the most cunning little things
Two boys ever saw, in all their lives!—
"Raw weather for the little fellows *now!*"
Said father, as though talking to himself,—
"Raw weather, and no home *now!*"—And off came
His warm old "waumus"; and in that he wrapped
The helpless little fellows then, and held
Them soft and warm against him as he could,—
And home we happy children followed him.—

Old "Ring" did not reach home till nearly dusk:
The mother-fox had led him a long chase—
"Yes, and a *fool's* chase, too!" he seemed to say,

And looked ashamed to hear us *praising* him.
But, *mother*—well, we *could not* understand
Her acting as she did—and we so *pleased!*
I can see yet the look of pained surprise
And deep compassion of her troubled face
When father very gently laid his coat,
With the young foxes in it, on the hearth
Beside her, as she brightened up the fire.
She urged—for the old fox's sake and theirs—
That they be taken back to the old tree;
But father—for *our* wistful sakes, no doubt—
Said we would keep them, and would try our best
To raise them. And at once he set about
Building a snug home for the little things
Out of an old big bushel-basket, with
Its fractured handle and its stoven ribs:
So, lining and padding this all cozily,
He snuggled in its little tenants, and
Called in John Wesley Thomas, our hired man,
And gave him in full charge, with much advice
Regarding the just care and sustenance of
Young foxes.—"John," he said, "you feed 'em
milk—
Warm milk, John Wesley! Yes, and *keep 'em by*
The stove—and keep your stove *a-roarin',* too,
Both night and day!—And keep 'em *covered* up—
Not *smothered,* John, but snug and comfortable—
And now, John Wesley Thomas, first and last,—
You feed 'em *milk—fresh* milk—and always
warm—

Say five or six or seven times a day—
Of course we'll grade that by the way they *thrive.*"
But, for all sanguine hope, and care, as well,
The little fellows *did not* thrive at all.—
Indeed, with *all* our care and vigilance,
By the third day of their captivity
The last survivor of the fated five
Squeaked, like some battered little rubber-toy,
Jist clean wore out.—And that's jist what 'e wuz!
And—nights,—the cry of the mother-fox for her young
Was heard, with awe, for long weeks afterward.
And we boys, every night, would go to the door
And, peering out in the darkness, listening,
Could hear the poor fox in the black bleak woods
Still calling for her little ones in vain.
As, all mutely, we returned to the warm fireside,
Mother would say: "How would you like for *me*
To be out there, this dark night, in the cold woods,
Calling for *my* children?"

II

UNCLE BRIGHTENS UP—

UNCLE he says 'at 'way down in the sea
Ever'thing's ist like it *used* to be:—
He says they's mermaids an' mermans, too,
An' little merchildern, like me an' you—
Little merboys, with tops an' balls,
An' little mergirls, with little merdolls.

III

A PET OF UNCLE SIDNEY'S

UNCLE Sidney's vurry proud
Of little Leslie-Janey,
'Cause she's so smart an' goes to school
Clean 'way in Pennsylvany!
She print' an' sent a postul-card
To Uncle Sidney, telling
How glad he'll be to hear that she
"Toock the onners in Speling."

IV

IN THE KINDERGARTEN OF NOBLE SONG

UNCLE he learns us to rhyme an' write
An' all be poets an' all recite:
His little-est poet's his little-est niece,
An' this is her little-est poetry-piece.

V

SINGS A "WINKY-TOODEN" SONG—

O HERE'S a little rhyme for the Spring- or
Summer-time—
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!—
Just a little bit o' tune you can twitter, May or June,
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!
It's a song that soars and sings,
As the birds that twang their wings
Or the katydids and things
Thus and so, don't you know,
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!

It's a song just broken loose, with no reason or excuse—
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!
You can sing along with it—or it matters not a bit—
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!

It's a lovely little thing
That 'most any one could sing
With a ringle-dingle-ding,
Soft and low, don't you know,
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!

VI

AND ANOTHER OF OUR BETSY—

US childern's all so lonesome,
We hardly want to *play*
Or skip or swing or anything,—
'Cause Betsy she's away!
She's gone to see her people
At her old home.—But then—
Oh! every child'll jist be wild
When she's back here again!

CHORUS

Then it's whoopty-doopty dooden!—
Whoopty-dooden then!
Oh! it's whoopty-doopty dooden,
When Betsy's back again!

She's like a mother to us,
  And like a sister, too—
Oh! she's as sweet as things to eat
  When all the dinner's through!
And hey! to hear her laughin'!
  And ho! to hear her sing!—
To have her back is all we lack
  Of havin' *everything!*

CHORUS

Then it's whoopty-doopty dooden!—
  Whoopty-dooden then!
Oh! it's whoopty-doopty dooden,
  When Betsy's back again!

Oh! some may sail the northern lakes,
  And some to foreign lands,
And some may seek old Nameless Creek,
  Or India's golden sands;
Or some may go to Kokomo,
  And some to Mackinac,—
But I'll go down to Morgantown
  To fetch our Betsy back.

CHORUS

Then it's whoopty-doopty dooden!—
  Whoopty-dooden then!
Oh! it's whoopty-doopty dooden,
  When Betsy's back again!

VII

AND MAKES NURSERY RHYMES

I

THE DINERS IN THE KITCHEN

OUR dog Fred
Et the bread.

Our dog Dash
Et the hash.

Our dog Pete
Et the meat.

Our dog Davy
Et the gravy.

Our dog Toffy
Et the coffee.

Our dog Jake
Et the cake.

Our dog Trip
Et the dip.

And—the worst,
From the first,—

Our dog *Fi*do
Et the pie-dough.

2

THE IMPERIOUS ANGLER

Miss Medairy Dory-Ann
Cast her line and caught a man,
But when he looked so pleased, alack!
She unhooked and plunked him back.—
"I never like to catch what I can,"
Said Miss Medairy Dory-Ann.

3

THE GATHERING OF THE CLANS

[*Voice from behind high board-fence.*]

"Where's the crowd that dares to go
Where I dare to lead?—you know!"

"Well, here's *one!*"
Shouts Ezry Dunn.

"Count me *two!*"
Yells Cootsy Drew.

"Here's yer *three!*"
Sings Babe Magee.

"Score me *four!*"
Roars Leech-hole Moore.

"Tally—*five!*"
Howls Jamesy Clive.

"I make *six!*"
Chirps Herbert Dix.

"Punctchul!—*seven!*"
Pipes Runt Replevin.

"Mark me *eight!*"
Grunts Mealbag Nate.

"I'm yet *nine!*"
Growls "Lud'rick" Stein.

"Hi! here's *ten!*"
Whoops Catfish Ben.

"And now we march, in daring line,
For the banks of Brandywine!"

4

"IT"

A WEE little worm in a hickory-nut
Sang, happy as he could be,—
"O I live in the heart of the whole round world,
And it all belongs to me!"

5

THE DARING PRINCE

A DARING prince, of the realm Rangg Dhune,
Once went up in a big balloon
That caught and stuck on the horns of the moon,
And he hung up there till next day noon—
When all at once he exclaimed, "Hoot-toot!"
And then came down in his parachute.

A SONG OF SINGING

SING! gangling lad, along the brink
Of wild brook-ways of shoal and deep,
Where killdees dip, and cattle drink,
And glinting little minnows leap!
Sing! slimpsy lass who trips above
And sets the foot-log quivering!
Sing! bittern, bumblebee, and dove—
Sing! Sing! Sing!

Sing as you will, O singers all
Who sing because you *want* to sing!
Sing! peacock on the orchard wall,
Or tree-toad by the trickling spring!
Sing! every bird on every bough—
Sing! every living, loving thing—
Sing any song, and anyhow,
But Sing! Sing! Sing!

THE JAYBIRD

THE Jaybird he's my favor*ite*
Of all the birds they is!
I think he's quite a stylish sight
In that blue suit of his:
An' when he 'lights an' shuts his wings,
His coat's a "cutaway"—
I guess it's only when he sings
You'd know he wuz a jay.

I like to watch him when he's lit
In top of any tree,
'Cause all birds git wite out of it
When *he* 'lights, an' they see
How proud he act', an' swell an' spread
His chest out more an' more,
An' raise the feathers on his head
Like it's cut pompadore!

A BEAR FAMILY

WUNZT, 'way West in Illinoise,
Wuz two Bears an' their two boys:
An' the two boys' names, you know,
Wuz—like *ours* is,—Jim an' Jo;
An' their *parunts'* names wuz same's
All big grown-up people's names,—
Ist *Miz* Bear, the neighbers call
'Em, an' *Mister* Bear—'at's all.
Yes—an' Miz Bear scold him, too,
Ist like grown folks *shouldn't* do!
Wuz a grea'-big river there,
An', 'crosst that, 's a mountain where
Old Bear said some day he'd go,
Ef she don't quit scoldin' so!
So, one day when he been down
The river, fishin', 'most to town,
An' come back 'thout no fish a-tall,
An' Jim an' Jo they run an' bawl
An' tell their ma their pa hain't fetch'
No fish,—she scold again an' ketch
Her old broom up an' biff him, too.—
An' he ist cry, an' say, *"Boo-hoo!*
I *told* you what I'd do some day!"

An' he ist turned an' runned away
To where's the grea'-big river there,
An' ist *splunged* in an' swum to where
The mountain's at, 'way th' other side,
An' clumbed up there. An' Miz Bear *cried*—
An' little Jo an' little Jim—
Ist like their ma—bofe cried fer him!—
But he clumbed on, *clean out o' sight,*
He wuz so mad!—An' served 'em right!
Nen—when the Bear got 'way on top
The mountain, he heerd somepin' flop
Its wings—an' somepin' else he heerd
A-rattlin'-like.—An' he wuz *skeered,*
An' looked 'way up, an'—*Mercy sake!*
It wuz a' Eagul an' a SNAKE!
An'-sir! the Snake, he bite an' kill'
The Eagul, an' they bofe fall till
They strike the ground—*k'spang-k'spat!*
Wite where the Bear wuz standin' at!
An' when here come the Snake at *him,*
The Bear he think o' little Jim
An' Jo, he did—an' their ma, too,—
All safe at home; an' he ist flew
Back down the mountain—an' could hear
The old Snake rattlin', sharp an' clear,
Wite clos't behind!—An' Bear he's so
All tired out, by time, you know,
He git down to the river there,
He know' he can't *swim* back to where
His folks is at. But ist wite nen

He see a boat an' six big men
'At's been a-shootin' ducks: An' so
He skeered them out the boat, you know,
An' ist jumped in—an' Snake *he* tried
To jump in, too, but falled outside
Where all the water wuz; an' so
The Bear grabs one the things you row
The boat wiv an' ist whacks the head
Of the old Snake an' kills him dead!—
An' when he's killed him dead, w'y, nen
The old Snake's drownded dead again!
Nen Bear set in the boat an' bowed
His back an' rowed—an' rowed—an' rowed—
Till he's safe home—so tired he can't
Do nothin' but lay there an' pant
An' tell his childern, "Bresh my coat!"
An' tell his wife, "Go chain my boat!"
An' they're so glad he's back, they say
"They *knowed* he's comin' thataway
To ist su'prise the dear ones there!"
An' Jim an' Jo they dried his hair
An' pulled the burs out; an' their ma
She ist set there an' helt his paw
Till he wuz sound asleep, an' nen
She telled him she won't scold again—
Never—never—never—
Ferever an' ferever!

SOME SONGS AFTER MASTER-SINGERS

I

SONG

[W. S.]

WITH a hey! and a hi! and a hey-ho rhyme!
O the shepherd lad
He is ne'er so glad
As when he pipes, in the blossom-time,
So rare!
While Kate picks by, yet looks not there.
So rare! so rare!
With a hey! and a hi! and a ho!
The grasses curdle where the daisies blow!

With a hey! and a hi! and a hey-ho vow!
Then he sips her face
At the sweetest place—
And ho! how white is the hawthorn now!—
So rare!—
And the daisied world rocks round them there.
So rare! so rare!
With a hey! and a hi! and a ho!
The grasses curdle where the daisies blow!

II

TO THE CHILD JULIA

[R. H.]

LITTLE Julia, since that we
May not as our elders be,
Let us blithely fill the days
Of our youth with pleasant plays.
First we'll up at earliest dawn,
While as yet the dew is on
The sooth'd grasses and the pied
Blossomings of morningtide;
Next, with rinsèd cheeks that shine
As the enamel'd eglantine,
We will break our fast on bread
With both cream and honey spread;
Then, with many a challenge-call,
We will romp from house and hall,
Gipsying with the birds and bees
Of the green-tress'd garden trees.
In a bower of leaf and vine
Thou shalt be a lady fine
Held in duress by the great
Giant I shall personate.
Next, when many mimics more
Like to these we have played o'er,
We'll betake us home-along
Hand in hand at evensong.

III

THE DOLLY'S MOTHER

[W. W.]

A LITTLE maid, of summers four—
Did you compute her years,—
And yet how infinitely more
To me her age appears:

I mark the sweet child's serious air,
At her unplayful play,—
The tiny doll she mothers there
And lulls to sleep away,

Grows—'neath the grave similitude—
An infant real, to me,
And *she* a saint of motherhood
In hale maturity.

So, pausing in my lonely round,
And all unseen of her,
I stand uncovered—her profound
And abject worshiper.

IV

WIND OF THE SEA

[A. T.]

WIND of the Sea, come fill my sail—
Lend me the breath of a freshening gale
And bear my port-worn ship away!
For O the greed of the tedious town—
The shutters up and the shutters down!
Wind of the Sea, sweep over the bay
And bear me away!—away!

Whither you bear me, Wind of the Sea,
Matters never the least to me:
Give me your fogs, with the sails adrip,
Or the weltering path thro' the starless night—
On, somewhere, is a new daylight
And the cheery glint of another ship
As its colors dip and dip!

Wind of the Sea, sweep over the bay
And bear me away!—away!

V

SUBTLETY

[R. B.]

WHILST little Paul, convalescing, was staying
Close indoors, and his boisterous classmates paying
Him visits, with fresh school-notes and surprises,—
With nettling pride they sprung the word "Athletic,"
With much advice and urgings sympathetic
Anent "athletic exercises." Wise as
Lad might look, quoth Paul: "I've pondered o'er that
'Athletic,' but I mean to take, before that,
Downstairic and outdooric exercises."

VI

BORN TO THE PURPLE

[W. M.]

MOST-LIKE it was this kingly lad
Spake out of the pure joy he had
In his child-heart of the wee maid
Whose eery beauty sudden laid
A spell upon him, and his words
Burst as a song of any bird's:—

A peerless Princess thou shalt be,
Through wit of love's rare sorcery:
To crown the crown of thy gold hair
Thou shalt have rubies, bleeding there
Their crimson splendor midst the marred
Pulp of great pearls, and afterward
Leaking in fainter ruddy stains
Adown thy neck-and-armlet-chains
Of turquoise, chrysoprase, and mad
Light-frenzied diamonds, dartling glad
Swift spirts of shine that interfuse
As though with lucent crystal dews
That glance and glitter like split rays
Of sunshine, born of burgeoning Mays
When the first bee tilts down the lip
Of the first blossom, and the drip
Of blended dew and honey heaves
Him blinded midst the underleaves.
For raiment, Fays shall weave for thee—
Out of the phosphor of the sea
And the frayed floss of starlight, spun
With counterwarp of the firm sun—
A vesture of such filmy sheen
As, through all ages, never queen
Therewith strove truly to make less
One fair line of her loveliness.
Thus gowned and crowned with gems and
gold,
Thou shalt, through centuries untold,
Rule, ever young and ever fair,
As now thou rulest, smiling there.

CLIMATIC SORCERY

WHEN frost's all on our winder, an' the snow's
All out-o'-doors, our "Old-Kriss"-milkman goes
A-drivin' round, ist purt' nigh froze to death,
With his old white mustache froze full o' breath.

But when it's summer an' all warm ag'in,
He comes a-whistlin' an' a-drivin' in
Our alley, 'thout no coat on, ner ain't cold,
Ner his mustache ain't white, ner he ain't old.

THE TREASURE OF THE WISE MAN

O THE night was dark and the night was late,
And the robbers came to rob him;
And they picked the locks of his palace-gate,
The robbers that came to rob him—
They picked the locks of his palace-gate,
Seized his jewels and gems of state,
His coffers of gold and his priceless plate,—
The robbers that came to rob him.

But loud laughed he in the morning red!—
For of what had the robbers robbed him?—
Ho! hidden safe, as he slept in bed,
When the robbers came to rob him,—
They robbed him not of a golden shred
Of the childish dreams in his wise old head—
"And they're welcome to all things else," he said,
When the robbers came to rob him.

OLD GRANNY DUSK

OLD Granny Dusk, when the sun goes down,
Here *she* comes into thish-yer town!
Out o' the wet black woods an' swamps
In she traipses an' trails an' tromps—
With her old sunbonnet all floppy an' brown,
An' her cluckety shoes, an' her old black gown,
Here *she* comes into thish-yer town!

Old Granny Dusk, when the bats begin
To flap around, comes a-trompin' in!
An' the katydids they rasp an' whir,
An' the lightnin'-bugs all blink at *her;*
An' the old Hop-toad turns in his thumbs,
An' the bunglin' June-bug booms an' bums,
An' the Bullfrog croaks, "O here *she* comes!"

Old Granny Dusk, though I'm 'feard o' you,
Shore-fer-certain I'm sorry, too:
'Cause you look as lonesome an' starved an' sad
As a mother 'at's lost ever' child she had.—
Yet never a child in thish-yer town
Clings at yer hand er yer old black gown,
Er kisses the face you're a-bendin' down.

FIRE AT NIGHT

FIRE! Fire! Ring! and ring!
Hear the old bell bang and ding!
Fire! Fire! 'way at night,—
Can't you hear?—I think you might!—
Can't hear them-air clangin' bells?—
W'y, *I* can't hear nothin' else!
Fire! Ain't you 'wake at last!—
Hear them horses poundin' past—
Hear that ladder-wagon grind
Round the corner!—and, behind,
Hear the hose-cart, turnin' short,
And the horses slip and snort,
As the engine's clank-and-jar
Jolts the whole street, near and far.
Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!
Can't you h'ist that winder higher?
La! they've all got past like "scat!" . . .
Night's as black as my old hat—
And it's rainin', too, at that! . . .
Wonder where their old fire's at!

THE YOUNG OLD MAN

VOLUNTARY BY ARTLESS "LITTLE BROTHER"

MAMMA is a widow: There's only us three—
Our pretty Mamma, little sister, and me:
And we've come to live in this new neighborhood
Where all seems so quiet, old-fashioned and good.
Mamma sits and sews at the window, and I—
I'm out at the gate when an old man goes by—
Such a *lovely* old man,—though I can't tell you why,
Unless it's his greeting,—"Good morning!
Good morning! good morning!" the old man will say,—
"Fine bracing weather we're having to-day!—
And how's little brother—
And sister—and mother?—
So dear to each other!—
Good morning!"

The old man goes by, in his glossy high-hat,
And stripe-trousers creased, and all turned-up, at that,
And his glancing nose-glasses—and pleasantest eyes,
As he smiles on me, always in newer surprise:
And though his mustache is as white as the snow,

He wears it waxed out and all pointed, you know,
And gloves, and high collar and bright, jaunty bow,
And stylish umbrella.—"Good morning!
Good morning! good morning!" the old man will say,—
"Fine falling weather we're promised to-day!—
And how's little brother—
And sister—and mother?—
So fond of each other!—
Good morning!"

. . . . . .

It's Christmas!—it's Christmas! and oh, but we're gay!
The postman's been here, and Ma says, "Run and play:—
You must leave your Mamma to herself for a while!"
And so sweet is her voice, and so tender her smile!—
And she looks *so* pretty and happy and—Well!—
She's just too delicious for language to tell!—
So Sis hugs her *more*—and *I* answer the bell,—
And there in the doorway—"Good morning!—
Good morning! good morning! good morning, I say!—
Fine Christmas weather we're having to-day!—
And how's little brother—
Dear sister—er, ruther—
Why, here *is* your ***mother*** . . .
Good morning!"

SOME CHRISTMAS YOUNGSTERS

I

THE STRENGTH OF THE WEAK

LAST Chris'mus, little Benny
Wuzn't sick so bad,—
Now he's had the worst spell
Ever yet he had.
Ever' Chris'mus-morning, though,
He'll p'tend as if
He's asleep—an' first you know
He's got your "Chris'mus-gif' "!

Pa he's good to *all* of us
All the time; but when,
Ever' time it's *Chris'mus,*
He's as good-again!—
'Sides our toys an' candy,
Ever' Chris'mus he
Gives us all a quarter,
Certain as can be!

Pa, this morning, tiptoe' in
To make the fire, you know,
Long 'fore it's daylight,
An' all's ice an' snow!—
An' Benny holler, *"Chris'mus-gif'!"*
An' Pa jump an' say,
"You'll only git a *dollar* if
You skeer me thataway!"

II

THE LITTLE QUESTIONER

BABE she's so always
Wantin' more to hear
All about Santy Claus,
An' says: "Mommy dear,
Where's Santy's *home* at
When he ain't *away?*—
An' is they *Mizzuz* Santy Claus
An' *little* folks—say?—
Chris'mus, Santy's always *here*—
Don't *they* want him, too?
When it *ain't* Chris'mus
What does he do?"

III

PARENTAL CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

PARUNTS don't git *toys* an' things,
Like you'd think they *ruther*.—
Mighty funny Chris'mus-gif's
Parunts gives each other!—
Pa give Ma a barrel o' flour,
An' Ma she give to Pa
The nicest dinin'-table
She know he ever saw!

TWILIGHT STORIES

NEITHER daylight, starlight, moonlight,
But a sad-sweet term of some light
By the saintly name of Twilight.

The Grandma Twilight Stories!—Still,
A childish listener, I hear
The katydid and whippoorwill,
In deepening atmosphere
Of velvet dusk, blent with the low
Soft music of the voice that sings
And tells me tales of long ago
And old enchanted things. . . .

While far fails the last dim daylight,
And the fireflies in the Twilight
Drift about like flakes of starlight.

"GO READ YOUR BOOK!"

HOW many times that grim old phrase
Has silenced me, in childish days!—
And *now*—as then it did—
The phantom admonition, clear
And dominant, rings,—and I hear,
And do as I am bid.

"Go read your book!" my good old sire
Commanded, in affected ire,
When I, with querying look
And speech, dared vex his studious mind
With idle words of any kind.—
And so I read my book.

Though seldom, in that *wisest* age,
Did I discern on Wisdom's page
More than the *task:* That led
At least to *thinking,* and at last
To reading less, and not so fast,
And longing as I read.

And, lo! in gracious time, I grew
To love a book all through and through!—
With yearning eyes I look

On any volume,—old, maybe,
Or new—'tis meat and drink to me.—
  And so I read my book.

Old dog's-eared Readers, scarred and inked
With schoolboy hatred, long extinct;—
  Old Histories that bored
Me worst of all the school;—old, worn
Arithmetics, frayed, ripped, and torn—
  Now Ye are all adored.

And likewise I revere and praise
My sire, as now, with vainest gaze
  And hearing, still I look
For the old face so grave yet dear—
Nay, still I *see*, and still I *hear!*
  And so I read my book.

Next even to my nearest kin,—
My wife—my children romping in
  From school to ride my knee,—
I love a book, and dispossess
My lap of it with loathfulness,
  For all their love of me.

For, grave or gay the book, it takes
Me as an equal—calms, or makes
  Me, laughing, overlook
My little self—forgetful all
Of being so exceeding small.
  And so I read my book.

WHEN UNCLE DOC WAS YOUNG

THOUGH Doctor Glen—the best of men—
Is wrinkled, old, and gray,
He'll always smile and stop a while
Where little children play:
And often then he tells us, when
He was a youngster, too,
He was as glad and bad a lad
As old folks ever knew!

As he walks down, no boy in town
But sees him half a block,
And stops to shout a welcome out
With "Here comes Uncle Doc!"
Then all the rest, they look their best
As he lines up among
Us boys of ten—each thinking then
When Uncle Doc was young.

We *run* to him!—Though grave and grim,
With voice pitched high and thin,
He still reveals the joy he feels
In all that *he* has been:

With heart too true, and honest, too,
To ever *hide* a truth,
He frankly owns, in laughing tones,
He was "a sorry youth!"—

When he was young, he says, he sung
And howled his level-best;
He says he guyed, and sneaked, and lied,
And wrecked the robin's nest.—
All this, and worse, will he rehearse,
Then smooth his snowy locks
And look the saint he says he ain't. . . .
Them eyes of Uncle Doc's!

He says, when he—like you and me—
Was just too low and mean
To slap asleep, he used to weep
To find his face was clean:
His hair, he said, was just too red
To tell with mortal tongue—
"The Burning Shame" was his nickname
When Uncle Doc was young.

THE LISPER

ELSIE MINGUS *lisps,* she does!
She lives wite acrosst from us
In Miz. Ayers'uz house 'at she
Rents part to the Mingusuz.—
Yes, an' Elsie plays wiv me.

Elsie lisps so, she can't say
Her own name, ist *anyway!*—
She say *"Elthy"*—like they wuz
Feathers on her words, an' they
Ist stick on her tongue like fuzz.

My! she's *purty,* though!—An' when
She *lisps,* w'y, she's purty *nen!*
When she telled me, wunst, her doll
Wuz so "thweet," an' I p'ten'
I lisp too,—she laugh'—'at's all!—

She don't never git mad none—
'Cause she know I'm ist in fun.—
Elsie she ain't one bit sp'iled.—
Of all childerns—ever' one—
She's the *ladylikest* child!—

My Ma *say* she is! One time
Elsie start to say the rhyme
"Thing a thong o' thixpenth"—*Whee!*
I ist *yell!* An' Ma say I'm
Unpolite as I can be!

Wunst I went wiv Ma to call
On Elsie's Ma, an' eat an' all;
An' nen Elsie, when we've et,
An' we're playin' in the hall,
Elsie say: It's etikett

Fer young gentlemens, like me,
Eatin' when they's *company,*
Not to never ever crowd
Down their food, ner "thip their tea
Ner thup thoop so awful loud!"

A MOTTO

THE *Brightest* Star's the *modestest,*
And more'n likely writes
His motto like the lightnin'-bug's—
Accordin' To His Lights.

A SIMPLE RECIPE

TO be a wholly worthy man,
As you, my boy, would like to be,—
This is to show you how you can—
This simple recipe:—

Be honest—both in word and act,
Be strictly truthful through and through:
Fact can not fail.—You stick to fact,
And fact will stick to you.

Be clean—outside and in, and sweep
Both hearth and heart and hold them bright;
Wear snowy linen—aye, and keep
Your *conscience* snowy-white.

Do right, your utmost—good *must* come
To you who do your level-best—
Your very hopes will help you some,
And work will do the rest.

HER LONESOMENESS

WHEN little Elizabeth whispers
Her morning-love to me,
Each word of the little lisper's,
As she clambers on my knee—
Hugs me and whispers, "Mommy,
Oh, I'm so glad it's day
And the night's all gone away!"
How it does thrill and awe me,—
"The night's all gone away!"

"Sometimes I wake, all listenin',"
She sighs, "and all's so still!—
The moon and the stars half-glistenin'
Over the window-sill:—
And I look where the gas's pale light
Is all turned down in the hall—
And you ain't here at all!—
And oh, how I wish it was daylight!
—And you ain't here at all!

"And oh," she goes eerily whining
And laughing, too, as she speaks,
"If only the sun kept shining
For weeks and weeks and weeks!—

For the world's so dark, without you,
And the moon's turned down so low—
'Way in the night, you know,—
And I get so lonesome about you!—
'Way in the night, you know!"

ALMOST BEYOND ENDURANCE

I AIN'T a-goin' to cry no more, no more!
I'm got ear-ache, an' Ma can't make
It quit a-tall;
An' Carlo bite my rubber-ball
An' puncture it; an' Sis she take
An' poke' my knife down through the stable-floor
An' loozed it—blame it all!
But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

An' Aunt Mame *wrote* she's comin', an' she *can't*—
Folks is come *there!*—An' I don't care
She *is* my Aunt!
An' my eyes stings; an' I'm
Ist coughin' all the time,
An' hurts me so; an' where my side's so sore
Grampa felt where, an' he
Says "Mayby it's *pleurasy!*"
But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

An' I clumbed up an' nen falled off the fence,
An' Herbert he ist laugh at me!
An' my fi'-cents
It sticked in my tin bank, an' I ist tore
Purt' nigh my thumbnail off, a-tryin' to git
It out—nen *smash* it!—An' it's in there yit!
But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

Oo! I'm so wickud!—An' my breath's so *hot*—
Ist like I run an' don't res' none
But ist run on when I ought to not;
Yes, an' my chin
An' lips's all warpy, an' teeth's so fast,
An' 's a place in my throat I can't swaller past—
An' they all hurt so!—
An' oh, my-oh!
I'm a-startin' ag'in—
I'm a-*startin'* ag'in, but I *won't,* fer shore!—
I ist ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

"I 'ist ain't a-goin' to cry no more, no more!"

THE TOY-BALLOON

THEY wuz a Big Day wunst in town,
An' little Jason's Pa
Buyed him a little toy-balloon,
The first he ever saw.—
An' oh! but Jase wuz *more'n* proud,
A-holdin' to the string
An' scrougin' through the grea'-big crowd,
To hear the Glee Club sing.

The Glee Club it wuz goin' to sing
In old Masonic Hall;
An' Speakin', it wuz in there, too,
An' soldiers, folks an' all:
An' Jason's Pa he git a seat
An' set down purty soon,
A-holdin' little Jase, an' him
A-holdin' his balloon.

An' while the Speakin' 's startin' up
An' ever'body still—
The first you know wuz little Jase
A-yellin' fit to kill!—

Nen Jason's Pa jump on his seat
An' grab up in the air,—
But little Jason's toy-balloon
Wuz clean away from there!

An' Jase he yelled; an' Jase's Pa,
Still lookin' up, clumb down—
While that-air little toy-balloon
Went bumpin' roun' an' roun'
Ag'inst the ceilin', 'way up there
Where ever'body saw,
An' *they* all yelled, an' *Jason* yelled,
An' little Jason's Pa!

But when his Pa he packed him out
A-screamin'—nen the crowd
Looked down an' hushed—till they looked up
An' howled ag'in out loud;
An' nen the speaker, mad an' pale,
Jist turned an' left the stand,
An' all j'ined in the Glee Club—"Hail,
Columby, Happy Land!"

THE OLD DAYS

THE old days—the far days—
  The overdear and fair!—
The old days—the lost days—
  How lovely they were!
The old days of Morning,
  With the dew-drench on the flowers
And apple-buds and blossoms
  Of those old days of ours.

Then was the *real* gold
  Spendthrift Summer flung;
Then was the *real* song
  Bird or Poet sung!
There was never censure then,—
  Only honest praise—
And all things were worthy of it
  In the old days.

There bide the true friends—
  The first and the best;
There clings the green grass
  Close where they rest:
Would they were here? No;—
  Would we were there! . . .
The old days—the lost days—
  How lovely they were!

TO A POET ON HIS MARRIAGE

MADISON CAWEIN

EVER and ever, on and on,
From winter dusk, to April dawn,
This old enchanted world we range
From night to light—from change to change—
Or path of burs or lily-bells,
We walk a world of miracles.

The morning evermore must be
A newer, purer mystery—
The dewy grasses, or the bloom
Of orchards, or the wood's perfume
Of wild sweet-williams, or the wet
Blent scent of loam and violet.

How wondrous all the ways we fare—
What marvels wait us, unaware! . . .
But yesterday, with eyes ablur
And heart that held no hope of Her,
You paced the lone path, but the true
That led to where she waited you.

LOCKERBIE FAIR

O THE Lockerbie Fair!—Have you heard of its fame
And its fabulous riches, too rare for a name!—
The gold of the noon of the June-time refined
To the Orient-Night, till the eyes and the mind
Are dazed with the sights, in the earth and the air,
Of the opulent splendors of Lockerbie Fair.

What more fortunate fate might to mortal befall,
Midst the midsummer beauty and bloom of it all,
Than to glit with the moon o'er the rapturous scene
And twink with the stars as they laughingly lean
O'er the luminous revel and glamour and glare
Fused in one dazzling glory at Lockerbie Fair.

The Night, like a queen in her purple and lace,
With her diamonded brow, and imperious grace,
As she leads her fair votaries, train upon train,
A-dance thro' the feasts of this mystic domain
To the mandolin's twang, and the warble and blare
Of voice, flute and bugle at Lockerbie Fair.

All strange, ever-changing, enchanted delights
Found now in this newer Arabian Nights,—
Where each lovely maid is a Princess, and each
Lucky swain an Aladdin—all treasures in reach
Of the *"lamps"* and the *"rings"*—and with *Genii* to
spare,
Simply waiting your orders, at Lockerbie Fair.

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

I'M The Old Man of the Sea—I am!—
And this is my secret pride,
That I have a hundred shapes, all sham,
And a hundred names beside:
They have named me "Habit," and "Way," forsooth,
"Capricious," and "Fancy-free";—
But to you, O Youth, I confess the truth,—
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

I'm The Old Man of the Sea, yo-ho!
So lift up a song with me,
As I sit on the throne of your shoulders, alone,
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

Crowned with the crown of your noblest thought,
I'm The Old Man of the Sea:
I reign, rule, ruin, and palter not
In my pitiless tyranny:
You, my lad, are my gay Sindbad,
Frisking about, with me
High on the perch I have always had—
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

I'm The Old Man of the Sea, yo-ho!
So lift up a song with me,
As I sit on the throne of your shoulders, alone,
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

Tricked in the guise of your best intent,
I am your failures—all—
I am the victories you invent,
And your high resolves that fall:
I am the vow you are breaking now
As the wassail-bowl swings free
And the red guilt flushes your cheek and brow—
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

I'm The Old Man of the Sea, yo-ho!
So lift up a song with me,
As I sit on the throne of your shoulders, alone,
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

I am your false dreams of success
And your mythical future fame—
Your lifelong lies, and your soul's distress
And your slowly-dying shame:
I'm the chattering half of your latest laugh,
And your tongue's last perfidy—
Your doom, your tomb, and your epitaph . . .
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

I'm The Old Man of the Sea, yo-ho!
So lift up a song with me,
As I sit on the throne of your shoulders, alone,
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

PROSE OR VERSE?

PROSE or Verse—or Verse or Prose?
Ever thus the query goes,—
Which delight do we prefer—
Which the finer—daintier?

Each incites a zest that grows—
Prose or Verse—or Verse or Prose?—
Each a lotus-eater's spell
Wholly irresistible.

All that wit may fashion, free-
Voiced, or piped in melody,—
Prose or Verse—or Verse or Prose—
Which of these the mastery knows?

'Twere as wise to question, friend—
As of this alluring blend,—
The aroma or the rose?—
Prose or Verse—or Verse or Prose?

BILLY MILLER'S CIRCUS-SHOW

AT Billy Miller's Circus-Show—
In their old stable where it's at—
The boys pays twenty pins to go,
An' gits their money's-worth at that!—
'Cause Billy he can climb and chalk
His stockin'-feet an' purt' nigh walk
A tight-rope—yes, an' *ef* he fall
He'll ketch, an' "skin a cat"—'at's all!

He ain't afeard to swing and hang
Ist by his legs!—an' mayby stop
An' yell "Look out!" an' nen—k-spang!—
He'll let loose, upside-down, an' drop
Wite on his hands! An' nen he'll do
"Contortion-acts"—ist limber through
As "Injarubber Mens" 'at goes
With shore-fer-certain circus-shows!

At Billy Miller's Circus-Show
He's got a circus-ring—an' they's
A dressin'-room,—so's he can go
An' dress an' paint up when he plays

He's somepin' else;—'cause sometimes he's
"Ringmaster"—bossin' like he please—
An' sometimes "Ephalunt"—er "Bare-
Back Rider," prancin' out o' there!

An' sometimes—an' the best of all!—
  He's "The Old Clown," an' got on clo'es
All stripud,—an' white hat, all tall
  An' peakud—like in shore-'nuff shows,—
An' got three-cornered red-marks, too,
On his white cheeks—ist like they do!—
An' you'd ist die, the way he sings
An' dances an' says funny things!

IT'S *GOT* TO BE

"WHEN it's *got* to be,"—like I always say,
As I notice the years whiz past,
And know each day is a yesterday,
When we size it up, at last,—
Same as I said when my boyhood went
And I knowed *we* had to quit,—
"It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!"—
So I said "Good-by" to *it*.

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!
So at least I always try
To kind o' say in a hearty way,—
"Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!"

The time just melts like a late, last snow,—
When it's *got* to be, it melts!
But I aim to keep a cheerful mind,
Ef I can't keep nothin' else!
I knowed, when I come to twenty-one,
That I'd soon be twenty-two,—
So I waved one hand at the soft young man,
And I said, "Good-by to *you!*"

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!
So at least I always try
To kind o' say, in a cheerful way,—
"Well, it's *got* to be.—Good-by!"

They kep' a-goin', the years and years,
Yet still I smiled and smiled,—
For I'd said "Good-by" to my single life,
And now had a wife and child:
Mother and son and the father—one,—
Till, last, on her bed of pain,
She jes' smiled up, like she always done,—
And I said "Good-by" again.

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!
So at least I always try
To kind o' say, in a humble way,—
"Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!"

And then my boy—as he growed to be
Almost a man in size,—
Was more than a pride and joy to me,
With his mother's smilin' eyes.—
He gimme the slip, when the War broke out,
And followed me. And I
Never knowed till the first fight's end . . .
I found him, and then, . . . "Good-by."

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!
So at least I always try
To kind o' say, in a patient way,
"Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!"

I have said, "Good-by!—Good-by!—Good-by!"
With my very best good will,
All through life from the first,—and I
Am a cheerful old man still:
But it's *got* to end, and it's *goin'* to end!
And this is the thing I'll do,—
With my last breath I will laugh, O Death,
And say "Good-by" to *you!* . . .

It's *got* to be! And again I say,—
When his old scythe circles high,
I'll laugh—of course, in the kindest way,—
As I say "Good-by!—Good-by!"

CHRISTMAS SEASON

TO A FRIEND VISITING ENGLAND

THIS is a Christmas carol—
A late one, it is true,—
But (dight in Truth's apparel)
The best that we can do:—
The best our Muse belated
Thus offers, antedated,—
E'en as the old waits waited
We, waiting, sing for you.

So, haply, you may listen,
As 'twere, with Fancy's ear,
And shape such songs of this-un
As were worth worlds to hear,—
Such anthemings ecstatic
As scaled The Mermaid's attic
In midnight's aromatic
Of choicest Christmas cheer:

Such songs as Marlowe lifted,
With throstle-throated Will
And rare Ben, as they shifted
Their laughing voices till

The mirth, with music blended,
So oversweet ascended,
It well were never ended—
And, hark!—you hear it still! . . .

You hear it; aye, and love it!—
Beyond all voices dear—
Your master's!—none above it.—
So harken, and so hear!—
Your master's English.—Surely
No other rests so purely
On Fame, or more securely,—
O English of Shakespeare!

ART AND POETRY

TO HOMER C. DAVENPORT

WESS he says, and sort o' grins,
"Art and Poetry is twins!

"Yit, if I'd my pick, I'd shake
Poetry, and no mistake!

"Pictures, allus 'peared to *me,*
Clean laid over Poetry!

"Let me *draw,* and then, i jings,
I'll not keer a straw who sings.

" 'F I could draw as you have drew,
Like to jes' swap pens with you!

"Picture-drawin' 's my pet vision
Of Life-work in Lands Elysian.

"Pictures is first language we
Find hacked out in History.

"Most delight we ever took
Was in our first Picture-book.

" 'Thout the funny picture-makers,
They'd be lots more undertakers!

"Still, as I say, Rhymes and Art
'Smighty hard to tell apart.

"Songs and pictures go together
Same as birds and summer weather."

So Wess says, and sort o' grins,
"Art and Poetry is twins."

THE CHILDREN OF THE CHILDLESS

THE Children of the Childless!—Yours—and
mine.—
Yea, though we sit here in the pitying gaze
Of fathers and mothers whose fond fingers twine
Their children's locks of living gold, and praise
With warm, caressing palms, the head of brown,
Or crown
Of opulent auburn, with its amber floss
In all its splendor loosed and jostled down
Across
The mother-lap at prayer.—Yea, even when
These sweet petitioners are kissed, and then
Are kissed and kissed again—
The pursed mouths lifted with the worldlier prayer
That bed and oblivion spare
Them yet a little while
Beside their envied elders by the glow
Of the glad firelight; or wresting, as they go,
Some promise for the morrow, to beguile
Their long exile
Within the wild waste lands of dream and sleep.
Nay, nay, not even these most stably real
Of children are more loved than our ideal—

More tangible to the soul's touch and sight
Than *these—our* children by Divine birthright. . . .
These—these of ours, who soothe us, when we
weep,
With tenderest ministries,
Or, flashing into smiling ecstasies,
Come dashing through our tears—ay, laughing leap
Into our empty arms, in Fate's despite,
And nestle to our hearts. O Heaven's delight!—
The children of the childless—even *these!*

HOOSIER SPRING-POETRY

WHEN ever'thing's a-goin' like she's got-
a-goin' now,—
The maple-sap a-drippin', and the buds on ever'
bough
A-sort o' reachin' up'ards all a-trimblin', ever' one,
Like 'bout a million Brownie-fists a-shakin' at the
sun!
The childern wants their shoes off 'fore their break-
fast, and the Spring
Is here so good-and-plenty that the old hen has to
sing!—
When things is goin' *thisaway,* w'y, that's the sign,
you know,
That ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!
Old Winter's up and dusted, with his dratted frost
and snow—
The ice is out the crick ag'in, the freeze is out the
ground,
And you'll see faces thawin' too ef you'll jes' look
around!—

The bluebird's landin' home ag'in, and glad to git
the chance,
'Cause here's where he belongs at, that's a settled
circumstance!
And him and mister robin now's a-chunin' fer the
show.
Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

The sun ain't jes' p'tendin' *now!*—The ba'm is in
the breeze—
The trees'll soon be green as grass, and grass as
green as trees;
The buds is all jes' *eechin'*, and the dogwood down
the run
Is bound to bu'st out laughin' 'fore another week is
done;
The bees is wakin', gap'y-like, and fumblin' fer their
buzz,
A-thinkin' ever-wakefuler, of other days that wuz,—
When all the land wuz orchard-blooms and clover,
don't you know. . . .
Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

THE VOICE OF PEACE

INDEPENDENCE BELL: INDIANAPOLIS, NOVEMBER 17, 1904

THOUGH now forever still
Your voice of jubilee—
We hear—we hear, and ever will,
The Bell of Liberty!
Clear as the voice to them
In that far night agone
Pealed from the heavens o'er Bethlehem,
The voice of Peace peals on!

Stir all your memories up,
O Independence Bell,
And pour from your inverted cup
The song we love so well!
As you rang in the dawn
Of Freedom—tolled the knell
Of Tyranny,—ring on—ring on—
O Independence Bell!

Ring numb the wounds of wrong
  Unhealed in brain and breast;
With music like a slumber-song
  Lull tearful eyes to rest.—
Ring! Independence Bell!
  Ring on till worlds to be
Shall listen to the tale you tell
  Of Love and Liberty!

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

Little Boy! Halloo!—halloo!
Can't you hear me calling you?—
Little Boy that used to be,
Come in here and play with me.

ALLUS when our Pa he's away
Nen Uncle Sidney comes to stay
At our house here—so Ma an' me
An' Etty an' Lee-Bob won't be
Afeard ef anything at night
Might happen—like Ma says it might.
(Ef *Trip* wuz *big,* I bet you he
'Uz best watch-dog you ever see!)
An' so last winter—ist before
It's go' be Chris'mus-Day,—w'y, shore
Enough, Pa had to haf to go
To 'tend a lawsuit—"An' the snow
Ist right fer Santy Claus!" Pa said,
As he clumb in old Ayersuz sled,
An' said he's sorry *he* can't be
With us that night—"'Cause," he-says-ee,
"Old Santy *might* be comin' here—
This very night of all the year
I' got to be away!—so all

You kids must tell him—ef he call—
He's mighty welcome, an' yer Pa
He left his love with you an' Ma
An' Uncle Sid!" An' clucked, an' leant
Back, laughin'—an' away they went!
An' Uncle wave' his hands an' yells
"Yer old horse ort to have on bells!"
But Pa yell back an' laugh an' say
"I 'spect when *Santy* come this way
It's time enough fer sleighbells nen!"
An' holler back "Good-by!" again,
An' reach out with the driver's whip
An' cut behind an' drive back Trip.

An' so all day it snowed an' snowed!
An' Lee-Bob he ist watched the road,
In his high-chair; an' Etty she
'Ud play with Uncle Sid an' me—
Like she wuz he'ppin' fetch in wood
An' keepin' old fire goin' good,
Where Ma she wuz a-cookin' there
In kitchen, too, an' ever'where!
An' Uncle say, "'At's ist the way
Yer Ma's b'en workin', night an' day,
Sence she hain't big as Etty is
Er Lee-Bob in that chair o' his!"
Nen Ma she'd laugh 't what Uncle said,
An' smack an' smoove his old bald head
An' say "Clear out the way till I
Can keep that pot from b'ilin' dry!"
Nen Uncle, when she's gone back to

The kitchen, says, "We *ust* to do
Some cookin' in the *ashes.—Say,*
S'posin' we try some, thataway!"
An' nen he send us to tell Ma
Send two big 'taters in he saw
Pa's b'en a-keepin' 'cause they got
The premiun at the Fair! An' what
You think?—He rake a grea'-big hole
In the hot ashes, an' he roll
Them old big 'taters in the place
An' rake the coals back—an' his face
Ist swettin' so's he purt' nigh swear
'Cause it's so hot! An' when they're there
'Bout time 'at we fergit 'em, he
Ist rake 'em out again—an' *gee!*—
He bu'st 'em with his fist wite on
A' old stove-led, while Etty's gone
To git the salt, an' butter, too—
Ist like he said she haf to do,
No matter what *Ma* say! An' so
He salt an' butter 'em, an' blow
'Em cool enough fer us to eat—
An' *me-o-my!* they're hard to beat!
An' Trip 'ud ist lay there an' pant
Like he'd laugh *out loud,* but he can't.
Nen Uncle fill his pipe—an' we
'Ud he'p him light it—Sis an' me,—
But mostly little Lee-Bob, 'cause
"He's the best *Lighter* ever wuz!"
Like Uncle telled him wunst when Lee-
Bob cried an' jerked the light from me,

He wuz so mad! So Uncle pat
An' pet him (Lee-Bob's ust to that—
'Cause he's the *little*-est, you know,
An' allus has b'en humored so!)
Nen Uncle gits the flat-arn out,
An', while he's tellin' us all 'bout
Old Chris'mus-times when *he's* a kid,
He ist cracked hickernuts, he did,
Till they's a crockful, mighty nigh!
An' when they're all done by an' by,
He raked the red coals out again
An' telled me, "Fetch that popcorn in,
An' old three-leggud skillut—an'
The *led* an' all now, little man,—
An' yer old Uncle here 'ull show
You how corn's popped, long years ago
When me an' Santy Claus wuz boys
On Pap's old place in Illinoise!—
An' your Pa, too, wuz chums, all through,
With Santy!—Wisht Pa'd be here, too!"
Nen Uncle sigh at Ma, an' she
Pat him again, an' say to me
An' Etty,—"You take warning fair!—
Don't talk too much, like Uncle there,
Ner don't fergit, like *him,* my dears,
That 'little pitchers has big ears!' "
But Uncle say to her, "Clear out!—
Yer brother knows what he's about.—
You git your Chris'mus-cookin' done
Er these pore childern won't have none!"
Nen Trip wake' up an' raise', an' nen

Turn roun' an' nen lay down again.
An' one time Uncle Sidney say,—
"When dogs is sleepin' thataway,
Like Trip, an' *whimpers,* it's a sign
He'll ketch *eight* rabbits—mayby *nine*—
Afore his fleas'll wake him—nen
He'll bite hisse'f to sleep again
An' *try* to dream he's go' ketch *ten.*"
An' when Ma's gone again back in
The kitchen, Uncle scratch his chin
An' say, "When Santy Claus an' Pa
An' me wuz little boys—an' Ma,
When she's 'bout big as Etty there;—
W'y,—'When we're *growed*—no matter *where,*'
Santy he cross' his heart an' say,—
'I'll come to see you, all, some day
When *you*' got childerns—all but me
An' pore old Sid!'" Nen Uncle he
Ist kind o' shade his eyes an' pour'
'Bout forty-'leven bushels more
O' popcorn out the skillut there
In Ma's new basket on the chair.
An' nen he telled us—an' talk' low,
"So Ma can't hear," he say:—"You know
Yer *Pa* know', when he drived away,
To-morry's go' be Chris'mus-*Day;*—
Well, nen *to-night,*" he whisper, "see?—
It's go' be Chris'mus-*Eve,*" says-ee,
"An', like yer Pa hint, when he went,
Old Santy Claus (now hush!) he's sent
Yer Pa a postul-card, an' write

He's shorely go' be here to-night. . . .
That's why yer Pa's so bored to be
Away to-night, when Santy he
Is go' be here, sleighbells an' all,
To make you kids a Chris'mus-call!"
An' we're so glad to know *fer shore*
He's comin', I roll on the floor—
An' here come Trip a-waller'n' roun'
An' purt' nigh knock the clo'eshorse down!—
An' Etty grab Lee-Bob an' prance
All roun' the room like it's a dance—
Till Ma she come an' march us nen
To dinner, where we're *still* again,
But *tickled* so we ist can't eat
But pie, an' ist the hot mincemeat
With raisins in.—But *Uncle* et,
An' *Ma.* An' there they set an' set
Till purt' nigh supper-time; nen we
Tell him he's got to fix the Tree
'Fore *Santy* gits here, like he said.
We go nen to the old woodshed—
All bundled up, through the deep snow—
"An' snowin' yet, *jee-rooshy-O!*"
Uncle he said, an' he'p us wade
Back where's the Chris'mus-Tree he's made
Out of a little jackoak-top
He git down at the sawmill-shop—
An' Trip 'ud run ahead, you know,
An' 'tend-like he 'uz *eatin'* snow—
When we all waddle back with it;
An' Uncle set it up—an' git

It wite in front the fireplace—'cause
He says "'Tain't *so* 'at Santy Claus
Comes down *all* chimblies,—least, to-night
He's comin' in *this* house all right—
By the front-door, as ort to be!—
We'll all be hid where we can *see!*"
Nen he look up, an' he see Ma
An' say, "It's ist too bad their *Pa*
Can't be here, so's to see the fun
The childern *will* have, ever' one!"

Well, *we!*—We hardly couldn't wait
Till it wuz dusk, an' dark an' late
Enough to light the lamp!—An' Lee-
Bob light a candle on the Tree—
"Ist *one*—'cause I'm 'The Lighter'!"—Nen
He clumb on Uncle's knee again
An' hug us *bofe;*—an' Etty git
Her little chist an' set on it
Wite clos't, while Uncle telled some more
'Bout Santy Claus, an' clo'es he wore
"All maked o' furs, an' trimmed as white
As cotton is, er snow at night!"
An' nen, all sudden-like, he say,—
"Hush! Listen there! Hain't that a sleigh
An' sleighbells jinglin'?" Trip go *"whooh!"*
Like *he* hear bells and *smell* 'em, too.
Nen we all listen. . . . An'-sir, shore
Enough, we hear bells—more an' more
A-jinglin' clos'ter—clos'ter still
Down the old crook-road roun' the hill.

An' Uncle he jumps up, an' all
The chairs he jerks back by the wall
An' th'ows a' overcoat an' pair
O' winder-curtains over there
An' says, *"Hide quick, er you're too late!—*
Them bells is stoppin' at the gate!—
Git back o' them-'air chairs an' hide,
'Cause I hear Santy's voice outside!"
An' *Bang! bang! bang!* we heerd the door—
Nen it flewed open, an' the floor
Blowed full o' snow—that's *first* we saw,
Till little Lee-Bob shriek' at Ma
"There's Santy Claus!—I know him by
His big white mufftash!"—an' ist cry
An' laugh an' *squeal* an' dance an' *yell*—
Till, when he quiet down a spell,
Old Santy bow an' th'ow a kiss
To him—an' one to me an' Sis—
An' nen go *clos't* to Ma an' stoop
An' kiss her—An' nen give a whoop
That *fainted* her!—'Cause when he bent
An' kiss her, he ist backed an' went
Wite 'g'inst the Chris'mus-Tree ist where
The candle's at Lee-Bob lit there!—
An' set his white-fur belt afire—
An' blaze streaked roun' his waist an' higher
Wite up his old white beard an' th'oat!—
Nen Uncle grabs th' old overcoat
An' flops it over Santy's head,
An' swing the door wide back an' said,
"Come out, old man!—an' *quick* about

It!—I've ist *got* to put you out!"
An' out he sprawled him in the snow—
"Now *roll!*" he says—*"Hi-roll-ee-O!"*—
An' Santy, sputter'n' *"Ouch! Gee-whiz!"*
Ist roll an' roll fer all they is!
An' Trip he's out there, too,—I know,
'Cause I could hear him yappin' so—
An' I heerd Santy, wunst er twic't,
Say, as he's rollin', *"Drat the fice't!"*
Nen Uncle come back in, an' shake
Ma up, an' say, "Fer mercy-sake!—
He hain't hurt none!" An' nen he said,—
"You youngsters h'ist up-stairs to bed!—
Here! kiss yer Ma 'Good night,' an' me,—
We'll he'p old Santy fix the Tree—
An' all yer whistles, horns an' drums
I'll he'p you toot when morning comes!"

. . . . . .

It's long while 'fore we go to sleep,—
'Cause down-stairs, all-time somepin' keep
A-kind o' scufflin' roun' the floors—
An' openin' doors, an' *shettin'* doors—
An' could hear Trip a-whinin', too,
Like he don't know ist *what* to do—
An' tongs a-clankin' down *k'thump!*—
Nen some one squonkin' the old pump—
An' *Wooh!* how cold it soun' out there!—
I could ist *see* the pump-spout where
It's got ice chin-whiskers all wet
An' drippy—An' I see it yet!
An' nen, seem-like, I hear some mens

A-talkin' out there by the fence,
An' one says, "Oh, 'bout twelve o'clock!"
"Nen," 'nother'n' says, "Here's to you, Doc!—
God bless us ever one!" An' nen
I heerd the old pump squonk again.
An' nen I say my prayer all through
Like Uncle Sidney learn' me to,—
"O Father mine, e'en as Thine own,
This child looks up to Thee alone:
Asleep or waking, give him still
His Elder Brother's wish and will."
An' that's the last I know . . . Till Ma
She's callin' us—an' so is *Pa*,—
He holler *"Chris'mus-gif'!"* an' say,—
"I'm got back home fer Chris'mus-Day!—
An' Uncle Sid's here, too—an' he
Is nibblin' 'roun' yer Chris'mus-Tree!"
Nen *Uncle* holler, "I suppose
Yer Pa's so proud he's froze his nose
He wants to turn it up at us,
'Cause *Santy* kick' up such a fuss—
Tetchin' hisse'f off same as ef
He wuz his own fireworks hisse'f!"

An' when we're down-stairs,—shore enough,
Pa's nose *is* froze, an' salve an' stuff
All on it—an' one hand's froze, too,
An' got a old yarn red-and-blue
Mitt on it—"An' he's froze some more
Acrost his chist, an' kind o' sore
All roun' his *dy*-fram," Uncle say.—

"But Pa he'd ort a-seen the way
Santy bear up last night when that-
Air fire break out, an' quicker'n *scat*
He's all a-blazin', an' them-'air
Gun-cotton whiskers that he wear
Ist *flashin'!*—till I burn a hole
In the snow with him, an' he roll
The front-yard dry as Chris'mus jokes
Old parents plays on little folks!
But, long's a smell o' tow er wool,
I kep' him rollin' *beautiful!*—
Till I wuz *shore* I *shorely* see
He's *squenched!* W'y, hadn't b'en fer *me,*
That old man might a-burnt clear down
Clean—plum'—level with the groun'!"
Nen Ma say, *"There,* Sid; that'll do!—
Breakfast is ready—*Chris'mus,* too.—
Your voice 'ud soun' best, sayin' *Grace*—
Say it." An' Uncle bow' his face
An' say so long a *Blessing* nen,
Trip bark' *two* times 'fore it's "A-men!"

WHAT LITTLE SAUL GOT, CHRISTMAS

US parents mostly thinks our own's
The smartest childern out!
But Widder Shelton's little Saul
Beats all I know about!
He's weakly-like—in p'int o' health,
But strong in word and deed
And heart and head, and snap and spunk,
And allus in the lead!

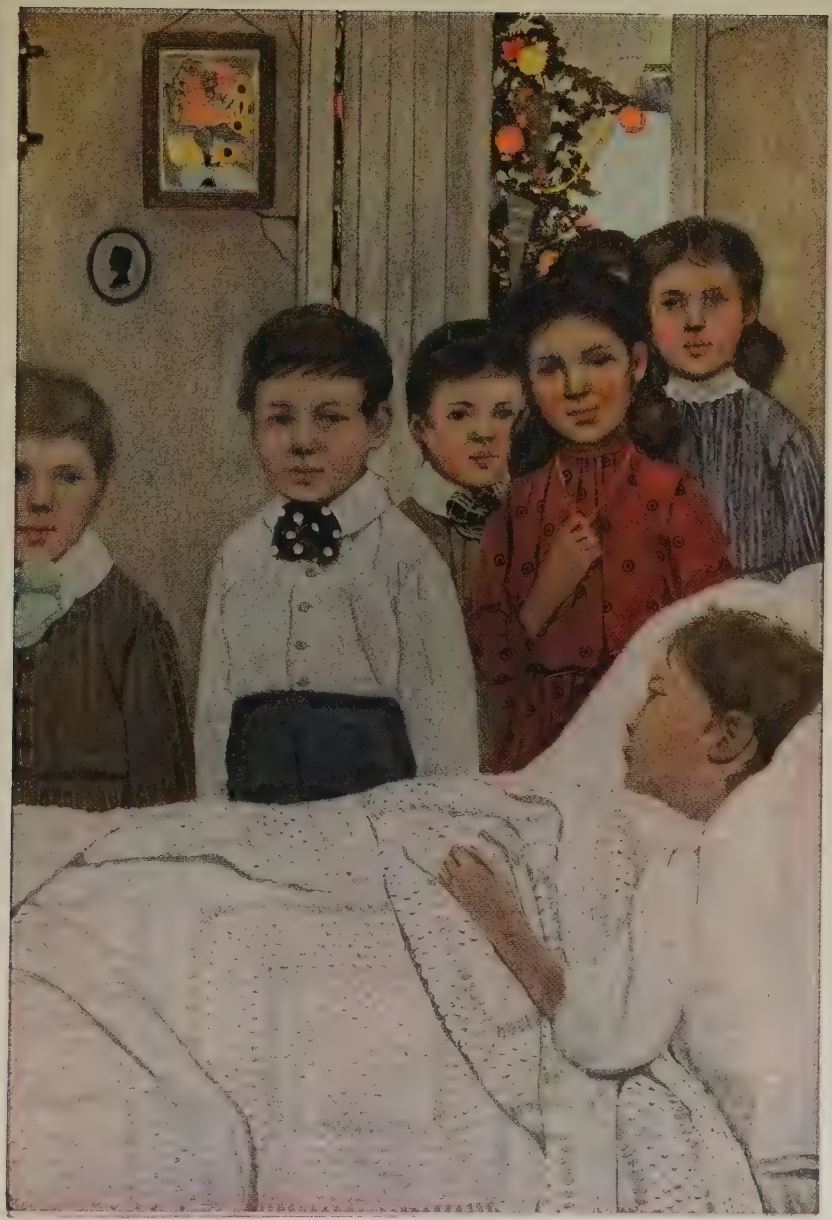
Comes honest by it, fer his Pa—
Afore he passed away—
He was a leader—(Lord, I'd like
To hear him preach to-day!)
He led his flock; he led in prayer
Fer spread o' Peace—and when
Nothin' but War could spread it, he
Was first to lead us then!

So little Saul has grit to take
Things jes' as they occur;
And Sister Shelton's proud o' him
As he is proud o' her!

'And when she "got up"—jes' fer him
And little playmates all—
A Chris'mus-tree—they ever'one
Was there but little Saul.

Pore little chap was sick in bed
Next room; and Doc was there,
And said the childern might file past,
But go right back to where
The *tree* was, in the settin'-room.
And Saul jes' laid and smiled—
Ner couldn't nod, ner wave his hand,
It hurt so—Bless the child!

And so they left him there with Doc—
And warm tear of his Ma's . . .
Then—suddent-like—high over all
Their laughture and applause—
They heerd: "I don't care what you git
On yer old Chris'mus-tree,
'Cause I'm got somepin' you all hain't—
I'm got the pleurisy!"



"Saul jes' laid and smiled"

GENERAL LEW WALLACE

FEBRUARY 15, 1905

NAY, Death, thou mightiest of all
Dread conquerors—thou dreadest chief,—
Thy heavy hand can here but fall
Light as the Autumn leaf:
As vainly, too, its weight is laid
Upon the warrior's knightly sword;—
Still through the charge and cannonade
It flashes for the Lord.

In forum—as in battle-field—
His voice rang for the truth—the right—
Keyed with the shibboleth that pealed
His Soul forth to the fight:
The inspiration of his pen
Glowed as a star, and lit anew
The faces and the hearts of men
Watching, the long night through.

A destiny ordained—divine
It seemed to hosts of those who saw
His rise since youth and marked the line
Of his ascent with awe:—

From the now-storied little town
  That gave him birth and worth, behold,
Unto this day of his renown,
  His sword and word of gold.

Serving the Land he loved so well—
  Hailed midsea or in foreign port,
Or in strange-bannered citadel
  Or Oriental Court,—
He—honored for his Nation's sake,
  And loved and honored for his own—
Hath seen his Flag in glory shake
  Above the Pagan Throne.

ON READING DR. HENRY VAN DYKE'S VOLUME OF POEMS—MUSIC

MUSIC!—Yea, and the airs you play—
Out of the faintest Far-Away
And the sweetest, too; and the dearest Here,
With its quavering voice but its bravest cheer—
The prayer that aches to be all expressed—
The kiss of love at its tenderest:
Music—music, with glad heart-throbs
Within it; and music with tears and sobs
Shaking it, as the startled soul
Is shaken at shriek of the fife and roll
Of the drums;—then as suddenly lulled again
With the whisper and lisp of the summer rain:
Mist of melodies fragrance-fine—
The bird-song flicked from the eglantine
With the dews when the springing bramble
throws
A rarer drench on its ripest rose,
And the wingèd song soars up and sinks
To the dove's dim coo by the river-brinks
Where the ripple's voice still laughs along
Its glittering path of light and song.
Music, O Poet, and all your own
By right of capture and that alone,—

For in it we hear the harmony
Born of the earth and the air and the sea,
And over and under it, and all through,
We catch the chime of The Anthem, too.

HER SMILE OF CHEER AND VOICE OF SONG

ANNA HARRIS RANDALL

SPRING fails, in all its bravery of brilliant gold
and green,—
The sun, the grass, the leafing tree, and all the
dazzling scene
Of dewy morning—orchard blooms,
And woodland blossoms and perfumes
With bird-songs sown between.

Yea, since *she* smiles not any more, so every flowery
thing
Fades, and the birds seem brooding o'er her silence
as they sing—
Her smile of cheer and voice of song
Seemed so divinely to belong
To ever-joyous Spring!

Nay, still she smiles.—Our eyes are blurred and see
not through our tears:
And still her rapturous voice is heard, though not of
mortal ears:—
Now ever doth she smile and sing
Where Heaven's unending Clime of Spring
Reclaims those gifts of hers.

THINKIN' BACK

I'VE be'n thinkin' back, of late,
S'prisin'!—And I'm here to state
I'm suspicious it's a sign
Of age, maybe, er decline
Of my faculties,—and yit
I'm not feelin' old a bit—
Any more than sixty-four
Ain't no young man any more!

Thinkin' back's a thing 'at grows
On a feller, I suppose—
Older 'at he gits, i jack,
More he keeps a-thinkin' back!
Old as old men git to be,
Er as middle-aged as me,
Folks'll find us, eye and mind
Fixed on what we've left behind—
Rehabilitatin'-like
Them old times we used to hike
Out barefooted fer the crick,
'Long 'bout Aprile first—to pick
Out some "warmest" place to go
In a-swimmin'—*Ooh! my-oh!*

"Thinkin' back's a thing 'at grows"

Wonder now we hadn't died!
Grate horseradish on my hide
Jes' *a-thinkin'* how cold then
That-'ere worter must 'a' be'n!

Thinkin' back—W'y, goodness me!
I kin call their names and see
Every little tad I played
With, er fought, er was afraid
Of, and so made *him* the best
Friend I had of all the rest!
Thinkin' back, I even hear
Them a-callin', high and clear,
Up the crick-banks, where they seem
Still hid in there—like a dream—
And me still a-pantin' on
The green pathway they have gone!
Still they hide, by bend er ford—
Still they hide—but, thank the Lord
(Thinkin' back, as I have said),
I hear laughin' on ahead!

SIS RAPALYE

WHEN rainy-greener shoots the grass
And blooms the cherry tree,
And children laugh by glittering brooks,
Wild with the ecstasy
Of bursting Spring, with twittering bird
And hum of honey-bee,—
"Sis Rapalye!" my spirit shouts . . .
And she is here with me!

As laugh the children, so her laugh
Haunts all the atmosphere;—
Her song is in the brook's refrain;
Her glad eyes, flashing clear,
Are in the morning dews; her speech
Is melody so dear,
The bluebird trills,—"Sis Rapalye!—
I hear!—I hear!—I hear!"

Again in races, at "Recess,"
I see her braided hair
Toss past me as I stay to lift
Her straw hat, fallen there;
The school-bell sends a vibrant pang
My heart can hardly bear.—
Yet still she leads—Sis Rapalye—
And leads me everywhere!

Now I am old.—Yet she remains
  The selfsame child of ten.—
Gay, gallant little girl, to race
  On into Heaven then!
Yet gallant, gay Sis Rapalye—
  In blossom-time, and when
The trees and grasses beckon her—
  Comes back to us again.

And so, however long since youth
  Whose raptures wild and free
An old man's heart may claim no more,—
  With more than memory
I share the Spring's own joy that brings
  My boyhood back to me
With laughter, blossoms, singing birds
  And sweet Sis Rapalye.

TO BLISS CARMAN

HE is the morning's poet—
The bard of mount and moor,
The minstrel fine of dewy shine,
The dawning's troubadour:

The brother of the bluebird,
'Mid blossoms, throng on throng,
Whose singing calls, o'er orchard walls,
Seem glitterings of song.

He meets, with brow uncovered,
The sunrise through the mist,
With raptured eyes that range the skies
And seas of amethyst:

The brambled rose clings to him;
The breezy wood receives
Him as the guest she loves the best
And laughs through all her leaves:

Pan and his nymphs and dryads
They hear, in breathless pause,
This earth-born wight lilt his delight,
And envy him because . . . .

He is the morning's poet—
  The bard of mount and moor,
The minstrel fine of dewy shine,
  The dawning's troubadour.

A SONG O' CHEER

MY Grampa he's a-allus sayin',
"Sing a song o' cheer!"—
And wunst I says "What kind *is* them?"
He says,—"The kind to *hear*.—
'Cause they're the songs that *Nature* sings,
In ever' bird that twitters!"
"Well, *whipperwills* and *doves*," says I,
"Hain't over-cheery critters!"
"Then don't you sing like *them*," he says—
"Ner *guinny-hens*, my dear—
Ner *peafowls* nuther (drat the boy!)
You sing a song o' cheer!"
I can't sing nothin' anyhow;
But, comin' home, to'rds night,
I kind o' sort o' kep' a-whistlin'
"Old—Bob—White!"

CHILD'S CHRISTMAS CAROL

CHRIST used to be like you and me,
When just a lad in Galilee,—
So when we pray, on Christmas Day,
He favors first the prayers we say:
Then waste no tear, but pray with cheer,
This gladdest day of all the year:

O Brother mine of birth Divine,
Upon this natal day of Thine
Bear with our stress of happiness
Nor count our reverence the less
Because with glee and jubilee
Our hearts go singing up to Thee.

I' GOT TO FACE MOTHER TO-DAY!

I' GOT to face Mother to-day, fer a fact!—
I' got to face Mother to-day!
And jes' how I'll *dare* to, an' how she will act,
Is more than a mortal can say!
But I' *got* to face her— I' *got* to! And so
Here's a' old father clean at the end of his row!

And Pink and Wade's gone to the farm fer her now—
And I'm keepin' house fer 'em here—
Their purty, new house—and all paid fer!—But how
Am *I* goin' to meet her, and clear
Uy *my* actchully he'ppin' 'em both to elope?—
('Cause Mother wuz set—and wuz no other hope!)

I don' think it's *Wade* she's so biased ag'in',
But his *bizness,*—a railroadin' man
'At runs a switch-engine, day out and day in,
And's got to make hay while he can,—
It's a *dangersome* job, I'll admit,—but see what
A fine-furnished home 'at he's already got!

And *Pink*—W'y, the girl wuz just pinin' away,—
So what could her old father do,
When he found her, hid-like, in a loose load of hay,
But jes' to drive on clean into
The aidge of the city, where—singular thing!—
Wade switched us away to the Squire, i jing!

Now—a-leavin' me here—they're driv off, with a cheer,
On their weddin'-trip—which is to drive
Straight home and tell Mother, and tol her back here
And surrender me, dead er alive!
So I'm waitin' here—not so blame' overly gay
As I *wuz*,—'cause I' got to face *Mother* to-day!

NAME US NO NAMES NO MORE

SING, oh, rarest of roundelays!—
Sing the hilarity and delight
Of our childhood's gurgling, giggling days!
When our eyes were as twinkling-keen and bright
And our laughs as thick as the stars at night,
And our breasts volcanoes of pent hoo-rays!
When we grouped together in secret mirth
And sniggered at everything on earth—
But specially when strange visitors came
And we learned, for instance, that their name
was Fishback—or Mothershead—or Philpott—
or Dalrymple—or Fullenwider—or Applewhite—
or Hunnicut—or Tubbs—or Oldshoe!
"'Oldshoe!'—jeminy-jee!" thinks we—
"Hain't that a funny name!—tee-hee-hee!"

Barefoot racers from everywhere,
We'd pelt in over the back-porch floor
For "the settin'-room," and cluster there
Like a clot of bees round an apple-core,
And sleeve our noses, and pinafore
Our smearcase-mouths, and slick our hair,
And stare and listen, and try to look

Like "Agnes" does in the old school-book,—
Till at last we'd catch the visitor's name,—
Reddinhouse, Lippscomb, or Burlingame,—
or Winkler—or Smock—or Tutewiler—or
Daubenspeck—or Throckmorton—or Rubottom
—or Bixler—
"'Bixler!' jeminy-jee!" thinks we—
"Hain't that a funny name!—tee-hee-hee!"

. . . . . .

Peace!—Let be!—Fall away!—Fetch loose!—
We can't have fun as we had fun *then!*—
Shut up, Memory!—what's the use?—
When the girls and boys of 8 and 10
Are now—well, *matronly,* or *old men,*
And Time has (so to say) "cooked our goose"!
But ah! if we only *could* have back
The long-lost laughs that we now so lack
And so vainly long for,—how—we—*could*
Naturely wake up the neigh-ber-*hood,*
over the still heterogenious names ever unrolling from the endless roster of orthographic actualities,—such names—for further instance of good faith—simply such names as Vanderlip—or Funkhouser—or Smoot—or Galbreath —or Frybarger—or Dinwiddie—or Bouslog— or Puterbaugh—or Longnecker—or Hartpence —or Wiggins—or Pangborn—or Bowersox—
"Bowersox"! Gee!—But alas! now we
Taste salt tears in our "tee-hee-hee"!

HENRY IRVING

OCTOBER 13, 1905

'TIS Art reclaims him! By those gifts of hers
With which so nobly she endowed his mind,
He brought back Shakespeare, in quick grief and glee—
Tasting the world's salt tears and sweet applause,—
For, even as through his master's, so there ran
Through all his multitudinous characters
Kinship and love and honor of mankind.
So all mankind shall grace his memory
In musing proudly: Great as his genius was,
Great likewise was the man.

LINCOLN—THE BOY

O SIMPLE as the rhymes that tell
The simplest tales of youth,
Or simple as a miracle
Beside the simplest truth—
So simple seems the view we share
With our Immortals, sheer
From Glory looking down to where
They were as children here.

Or thus we know, nor doubt it not,
The boy he must have been
Whose budding heart bloomed with the thought
All men are kith and kin—
With love-light in his eyes and shade
Of prescient tears:—Because
Only of such a boy were made
The loving man he was.

NICHOLAS OBERTING

A hero of ancient mold is Nicholas Oberting, of Hardentown, Indiana, who, a few days ago, in saving three boys from being gored to death by his infuriated bull, performed a feat of daring comparable only with the valorous deeds of Roman gladiators. . . .

—INDIANAPOLIS STAR.

SING! O Voice of Valor, sing!—
Sing of Nicholas Oberting!
Giant of the strength of ten,
Yet the gentlest of all men.

He it was that loved the air,
And the green fields everywhere—
Loved the meadow slopes and rills,
And the cattle on the hills—
Loved all out-o'-doors, and took
Off his hat, with reverent look,
As the balmy winds of Spring
Waved the peach-bough, blossoming
At the orchard edge, where he
Paused to mark the minstrelsy
Of the daring first redbreast,
Whose lilt, at its loveliest,

Was not lovelier to hear
Than the laughter, ringing near,
Of child-voices—Truants,—three
Little stragglers, he could see,
Crossing the near pasture-land
Loiteringly, hand in hand,
Laughing as they came. . . . Until—
Sudden ran a sickening chill
Through the strong man's heart! . . . He heard
Scarce his own voice, afterward,
For the maddened, bellowing roar
Of the monster beast that bore
Down upon the lads. . . . Out rang
His quick warning.—Then he sprang
Forth to meet them, crying, *"Run!—*
Straight for me!—Come on!—Well done!"—
Praised them—cheered them.—*"Good! Hooray!*
Now, Red-top, you throw away
That cap! but don't"—And breathless hung
The sentence;—for a root had flung
The youngster—stunned—prone on the ground . . .
Then—midst a trampling, thund'rous sound,
The bellowing beast, with his big bent head,
And great horns, white as his eyes were red!—
Charged for the lad, as he helpless lay . . .
There was a leap then; and—they say
(For but one boy had swooned away)—
There was the *leap* and the *laugh* of *a Man* . . .
And the bravest war of the world began:
Pinned by the horns in the Hercules grip
Of his master—the slavering jaws adrip,

The foaming, steaming, sweltering, hot-
Mouthed monster raged and charged and fought,—
But ever the great strong hands were set
At their horny leverage, bloody-wet;
And ever steadier pressed the hold,
And ever the wild eyes wilder rolled
As the thick neck turned, and the great hulk grew
Like an o'er-fed engine, shuddering through—
Yet the thick neck turned—and turned—and
turned—
Till the raw tongue shot from the throat and burned
The live air foul; and the beast lurched dead
Crunchingly.
. . . And the youngster said
That the big man just lay there and cried—
He was so sorry and satisfied!

RABBIT

I S'POSE it takes a feller 'at's be'n
Raised in a country-town, like me,
To *'preciate* rabbits! . . . Eight er ten
Bellerin' boys and two er three
Yelpin' dawgs all on the trail
O' one little pop-eyed cottontail!

'Bout the first good fall o' snow—
So's you kin track 'em, don't you know,
Where they've run,—and one by one
Hop 'em up and chase 'em down
And prod 'em out of a' old bresh-pile
Er a holler log they're a-hidin' roun',
Er, way en-nunder the ricked cord-wood
Er crosstie-stack by the railroad track
'Bout a mile
Out o' sight o' the whole ding town! . . .
Well! them's times 'at I call good!

Rabbits!—w'y, as my thoughts goes back
To them old boyhood days o' mine,
I kin sic him now and see "Old Jack"
A-plowin' snow in a rabbit-track

And a-pitchin' over him, head and heels,
Like a blame' hat-rack,
As the rabbit turns fer the timber-line
Down the County Ditch through the old corn-
fields. . . .

Yes, and I'll say right here to you,
Rabbits that boys has *earnt,* like that—
Skinned and hung fer a night or two
On the old back-porch where the pump's done
froze—
Then fried 'bout right, where your brekfust's at,
With hot brown gravy and shortenin' bread,—
Rabbits, like *them*—er I ort to 'a' said,
I s'pose,
Rabbits like *those*
Ain't so p'ticalar pore, I guess,
Fer *eatin'* purposes!

A SPRING SONG AND A LATER

SHE sang a song of May for me,
Wherein once more I heard
The mirth of my glad infancy—
The orchard's earliest bird—
The joyous breeze among the trees
New-clad in leaf and bloom,
And there the happy honey-bees
In dewy gleam and gloom.

So purely, sweetly on the sense
Of heart and spirit fell
Her song of Spring, its influence—
Still irresistible,—
Commands me here—with eyes ablur—
To mate her bright refrain,
Though I but shed a rhyme for her
As dim as Autumn rain.

OURS

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, DECEMBER 8, 1906

READ AT A BANQUET IN HONOR OF HENRY WATTERSON
UPON HIS DEPARTURE FOR SPAIN

HERE where of old was heard
The ringing, singing word
That orator and bard
Alike set free
To soar, through heights profound,
Our land's remotest bound,
Till all is holy ground
From sea to sea—

Here still, with voice and pen,
ONE cheers the hopes of men
And gives us faith again—
This gifted one
We hold here as the guest
Most honored—loved the best—
Wisest and worthiest—
Our Watterson.

His spirit is the Seer's—
For, though he sees and hears
Through human doubts and fears,
    His heart is one
With Earth's and the Divine—
With his home-hearts—and mine—
And the child's heart is thine,
    Our Watterson!

Give us to touch and praise
His worth in subtlest ways,
Lest even our fondest gaze
    He fain would shun—
Laugh, though a mist appears—
The glad wine salt with tears—
Laugh, as we drain it—"Here's
    Our Watterson!"

OLD INDIANY

Intended for a Dinner of The Indiana Society of Chicago

OLD Indiany, 'course we know
Is first, and best, and *most,* also,
Of *all* the States' whole forty-four:—
She's first in ever'thing, that's shore!—
And *best* in ever'way as yet
Made known to man; and you kin bet
She's *most,* because she won't confess
She ever was, or will be, *less!*
And yet, fer all her proud array
Of sons, how many gits away!—
No doubt about her bein' *great*
But, fellers, she's a leaky State!
And them that boasts the most about
Her, them's the ones that's dribbled out.
Law! jes' to think of all you boys
'Way over here in Illinoise
A-celebratin', like ye air,
Old Indiany, 'way back there
In the dark ages, so to speak,
A-prayin' for ye once a week
And wonderin' what's a-keepin' you
From comin', like you ort to do.
You're all a-lookin' well, and like

You wasn't "sidin' up the pike,"
As the tramp-shoemaker said
When "he sacked the boss and shed
The blame town, to hunt fer one
Where they didn't work fer fun!"
Lookin' *extry* well, I'd say,
Your old home so fur away.—
Maybe, though, like the old jour.,
Fun hain't all yer workin' fer.
So you've found a job that pays
Better than in them old days
You was on The Weekly Press,
Heppin' run things, more er less;
Er a-learnin' telegraph-
Operatin', with a half-
Notion of the tinner's trade,
Er the dusty man's that laid
Out designs on marble and
Hacked out little lambs by hand,
And chewed finecut as he wrought,
"Shapin' from his bitter thought"
Some squshed mutterings to say,—
"Yes, hard work, and porer pay!"
Er you'd kind o' thought the far-
Gazin' kuss that owned a car
And took pictures in it, had
Jes' the snap you wanted—bad!
And you even wondered why
He kep' foolin' with his sky-
Light the same on shiny days
As when rainin'. ('T leaked always.)

Wondered what strange things was hid
In there when he shet the door
And smelt like a burnt drug store
Next some orchard-trees, i swan!
With whole roasted apples on!
That's why Ade is, here of late,
Buyin' in the dear old state,—
So's to cut it up in plots
Of both town and country lots.

LONGFELLOW

1807—FEBRUARY 27—1907

O GENTLEST kinsman of Humanity!
Thy love hath touched all hearts, even as thy Song
Hath touched all chords of music that belong
To the quavering heaven-strung harp of harmony:
Thou hast made man to feel and hear and see
Divinely;—made the weak to be the strong;
By thy melodious magic, changed the wrong
To changeless right—and joyed and wept as we.
Worlds listen, lulled and solaced at the spell
That folds and holds us—soul and body, too,—
As though thy songs, as loving arms in stress
Of sympathy and trust ineffable,
Were thrown about us thus by one who knew
Of common human need of kindliness.

WITH A CHILD-BOOK

TO MASTER PRESTON FROM HIS LONG INVISIBLE PLAYMATE

THERE is LORE of more devices,
And ROMANCE that more entices
Higher minds and higher prices;—
But, for "Giggle-boy" or "Cry-sis"
(With some sniffless interstices)
Here's a little tale suffices—
Sweet as oranges in slices
Slobbed in slues o' cream and ices,
Tanged with tingling, spangling spices.—
Ho! there's *no* tale half so nice as
This Old Tailor and his Mice is!

THE DOCTOR

He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear;
And struck his finger on the place,
And said: "Thou ailest here, and here!"
—MATTHEW ARNOLD

WE may idealize the chief of men—
Idealize the humblest citizen,—
Idealize the ruler in his chair—
The poor man, or the poorer millionaire;
Idealize the soldier—sailor—or
The simple man of peace—at war with war;—
The hero of the sword or fife-and-drum. . . .
Why not idealize the Doctor some?

The Doctor is, by principle, we know,
Opposed to sentiment. He veils all show
Of feeling, and is proudest when he hides
The sympathy which natively abides
Within the stoic precincts of a soul
Which owns strict duty as its first control,
And so must guard the ill, lest worse may
come. . . .
Why not idealize the Doctor some?

He is the master of emotions—he
Is likewise certain of that mastery,—
Or dare he face contagion in its ire,
Or scathing fever in its leaping fire?
He needs must smile upon the ghastly face
That yearns up toward him in that warded
place
Where even the Saint-like Sisters' lips grow
dumb.
Why not idealize the Doctor some?

He wisely hides his heart from you and me—
He hath grown tearless, of necessity,—
He knows the sight is clearer, being blind;
He knows the cruel knife is very kind;
Ofttimes he must be pitiless, for thought
Of the remembered wife or child he sought
To save through kindness that was overcome.
Why not idealize the Doctor some?

Bear with him, trustful, in his darkest doubt
Of how the mystery of death comes out;
He knows—he knows,—ay, better yet than we,
That out of Time must dawn Eternity;
He knows his own compassion—what *he* would
Give in relief of all ills, if he could.—
We wait alike one Master: He will come.
Do we idealize the Doctor some?

ABE MARTIN

ABE MARTIN!—dad-burn his old picture!
P'tends he's a Brown County fixture—
A kind of a comical mixture
Of hoss-sense and no sense at all!
His mouth, like his pipe, 's allus goin',
And his thoughts, like his whiskers, is flowin',
And what he don't know ain't wuth knowin'—
From Genesis clean to baseball!

The artist, Kin Hubbard, 's so keerless
He draws Abe 'most eyeless and earless,
But he's never yet pictured him cheerless
Er with fun 'at he tries to conceal,—
Whuther on to the fence er clean over
A-rootin' up ragweed er clover,
Skeert stiff at some "Rambler" er "Rover"
Er newfangled automo*beel!*

It's a purty steep climate old Brown's in;
And the rains there his ducks nearly drowns in
The old man hisse'f wades his rounds in
As ca'm and serene, mighty nigh

As the old handsaw-hawg, er the mottled
Milch cow, er the old rooster wattled
Like the mumps had him 'most so well throttled
That it was a pleasure to die.

But best of 'em all's the fool-breaks 'at
Abe don't see at all, and yit makes 'at
Both me and you lays back and shakes at
His comic, miraculous cracks
Which makes him—clean back of the power
Of genius itse'f in its flower—
This Notable Man of the Hour,
Abe Martin, The Joker on Facts.

MORNING

BREATH of Morning—breath of May—
With your zest of yesterday
And crisp, balmy freshness, smite
Our old hearts with Youth's delight.

Tilt the cap of Boyhood—yea,
Where no "forelock" waves, to-day,—
Back, in breezy, cool excess,
Stroke it with the old caress.

Let us see as we have seen—
Where all paths are dewy-green,
And all human-kind are kin—
Let us be as we have been!

THE LOVELINESS

AH, what a long and loitering way
And ever-lovely way, in truth,
We travel on from day to day
Out of the realms of youth!

How eagerly we onward press
The lovely path that lures us still
With ever-changing loveliness
Of grassy vale and hill:

Of groves of May and morning-lands
Dew-diamonded and gemmed with bloom;
With amber streams and golden sands
And aisles of gleam and gloom;

Where lovely little Fairy-folk,
In careless ambush, pipe and call
From tousled ferns 'neath elm and oak
By shoal and waterfall:

Transparent even as the stream,
The gnarlèd prison-tree reveals
Its lovely Dryad in a dream
That scarce itself conceals;

The sudden redbird trips the sight
  And tricks the ear—or doubtless we
With happy palms had clapped the Sprite
  In new captivity.

On—on, through all the gathering years,
  Still gleams the loveliness, though seen
Through dusks of loss and mists of tears
  That vainly intervene.

Time stints us not of lovely things—
  Old Age hath still a treasure-store,—
The loveliness of songs and wings
  And voices on before.—

And—loveliness beyond all grace
  Of lovely words to say or sing,—
The loveliness of Hope's fair face
  Forever brightening.

A PARTING GUEST

WHAT delightful hosts are they—
Life and Love!
Lingeringly I turn away,
This late hour, yet glad enough
They have not withheld from me
Their high hospitality.
So, with face lit with delight
And all gratitude, I stay
Yet to press their hands and say,
"Thanks.—So fine a time! Good night."

"OUT OF REACH"

YOU think them "out of reach," your dead?
Nay, by my own dead, I deny
Your "out of reach."—Be comforted:
'Tis not so far to die.

O by their dear remembered smiles
And outheld hands and welcoming speech,
They wait for us, thousands of miles
This side of "out of reach."

MY FOE

MY Foe? You name yourself, then,—I refuse
A term so dark to designate you by.
To me you are most kind and true; and I
Am grateful as the dust is for the dews
That brim the dusk, and falter, drip and ooze
From the dear darkness of the summer sky.
Vex not yourself for lack of moan or cry
Of mine. Not any harm, nor ache nor bruise
Could reach my soul through any stroke you fain
Might launch upon me,—it were as the lance
Even of the lightning did it leap to rend
A ray of sunshine—'twould recoil again.
So, blessing you, with pitying countenance,
I wave a hand to you, my helpless friend.

SOME IMITATIONS

I

POMONA

(Madison Cawein)

OH, the golden afternoon!—
Like a ripened summer day
That had fallen oversoon
In the weedy orchard-way—
As an apple, ripe in June.

He had left his fishrod leant
O'er the footlog by the spring—
Clomb the hill-path's high ascent,
Whence a voice, down showering,
Lured him, wondering as he went.

Not the voice of bee nor bird,
Nay, nor voice of man nor child,
Nor the creek's shoal-alto heard
Blent with warblings sweet and wild
Of the midstream, music-stirred.

'Twas a goddess! As the air
  Swirled to eddying silence, he
Glimpsed about him, half aware
  Of some subtle sorcery
Woven round him everywhere.

Suavest slopes of pleasaunce, sown
  With long lines of fruited trees
Weighed o'er grasses all unmown
  But by scythings of the breeze
In prone swaths that flashed and shone

Like silk locks of Faunus sleeked
  This, that way, and contrawise,
Through whose bredes ambrosial leaked
  Oily amber sheens and dyes,
Starred with petals purple-freaked.

Here the bellflower swayed and swung,
  Greenly belfried high amid
Thick leaves in whose covert sung
  Hermit-thrush, or katydid,
Or the glowworm nightly clung.

Here the damson, peach and pear;
  There the plum, in Tyrian tints,
Like great grapes in clusters rare;
  And the metal-heavy quince
Like a plummet dangled there.

All ethereal, yet all
  Most material,—a theme
Of some fabled festival—
  Save the fair face of his dream
Smiling o'er the orchard wall.

II

THE PASSING OF A ZEPHYR

(*Sidney Lanier*)

UP from, and out of, and over the opulent woods
  and the plains,
Lo! I leap nakedly loose, as the nudest of gods
  might choose,
For to dash me away through the morning dews
And the rathe Spring rains—
Pat and pet the little green leaves of the trees and
  the grass,
Till they seem to linger and cling, as I pass,
And are touched to delicate contemporaneous tears
  of the rain and the dew,
That lure mine eyes to weeping likewise, and to
  laughter, too:
For I am become as the balmiest, stormiest zephyr
  of Spring,
With manifold beads of the marvelous dew and the
  rain to string
On the bended strands of the blossoms, blown
And tossed and tousled and overthrown,

And shifted and whirled, and lifted unfurled
In the victory of the blossoming
Of the flags of the flowery world.
Yea, and behold! and a riotous zephyr, at last,
I subside; I abate; I pass by; I am past.
And the small, hoarse bass of the bumblebee
Is my requiem-psalm,
And I fling me down to a listless, loitering, long
eternity
Of amiable calm.

III

EF UNCLE REMUS PLEASE TER 'SCUSEN ME

(*Joel Chandler Harris*)

DEY wunce wuz er time which I gwinetĕr
tell you 'bout it—
An' it's easy ter believe it sho'ly ez it is ter doubt
it!—
So des you pick yer "ruthers" whilse I tell how ole
Br'er Rabbit
Wunce know de time when he git de fightin' habit.
Co'se he ain't no bragger, des a-rippin' an' a-rarin'
An' a-darin' all de beestus an' a-des a-double-darin'
Sich ez Mr. Jonus Lion, er Sir Mr. Twister Tagger,
Er Sister Hisstopottomus, er A'nt Ferjinny Ja'gger!
Yit, des de same, he layin' low an' know he got de
muscle
What sho' ter s'prise mos' any size what crowd 'im
fer a tussle.—

But speshully he 'spise de *Dawg,* an' sight er one
des make 'im
Fergit hisse'f an' run 'em down an' grab 'em up an'
shake 'em!—
An', mo' 'n dat, ef 'twuzn't fer de Dawg-law den
ag'in' it,
He'd des a-kilt off ev'y Dawg dat's chasin' him dis
minute!

IV

A RHYME FOR CHRISTMAS

IF *Browning* only were here,
This yule-ish time o' the year—
This mule-ish time o' the year,
Stubbornly still refusing
To add to the rhymes we've been using
Since the first Christmas-glee
(One might say) chantingly
Rendered by rudest hinds
Of the pelt-clad shepherding kinds
Who didn't know Song from b-
U-double-l's-foot!—pah!—
(Haply the old Egyptian *ptah*—
Though I'd hardly wager a baw-
Bee—or a *bumble,* for that—
And that's flat!) . . .
But the thing that I want to get at
Is a rhyme for *Christmas*—
Nay! nay! nay! nay! not *isthmus*—
The t- and the h-sounds covertly are
Gnawing the nice auricular

Senses until one may hear them gnar—
And the terminal, too, for m*as* is m*us,*
So *that* will not do for us.
Try for it—sigh for it—cry for it—die for it!
O *but* if Browning were here to apply for it,
He'd rhyme you *Christmas—*
He'd make a *mist pass*
Over—something o' ruther—
Or find you the rhyme's very brother.
In lovers that *kissed fast*
To baffle the moon—as he'd lose the *t*-final
In fas-t as it blended with *to* (mark the spinal
Elision—tip-clipt as exquisitely nicely
And hyper-exactingly sliced to precisely
The extremest technical need): Or he'd *twist glass,*
Or he'd have a *kissed lass,*
Or shake 'neath our noses some great giant *fist-mass—*
No matter! If Robert were here, *he* could do it,
Though it took us till Christmas next year to see through it.

V

Vaudeville Skits

I

SERENADE AT THE CABIN

Oh, my little Sadie Sue, I's a-serenadin' you—
Fer you's de onliest lady-love o' mine;
De White Folk's dance done over, I has still a chune er two

Below your winder's mohnin'-glory-vine.
Your good ole mammy's gyarden is, fer shore, a
ha'nted place,
Dis midnight whilse I's cropin' 'mongst de bloom;
Yit de moon dah 'bove de chimbly ain' no fairer dan
de face
What's hidin' 'hind de curtain o' your room.

Chorus

Den wake, my colored blonde with eyes o' blue,
An' lips ez red ez roses renshed with dew;
Yo' hair ez fair an' fine
Ez de skeins o' June sunshine,
My little, light-complected Sadie Sue!

In de "Gran's" old dinin'-hall, playin' fer de White
Folk's ball,
I watch deir pick o' ladies ez dey glide,
An' says I, "My Sadie Sue she 'ud shorely best you
all
Ef she 'uz here a-waltzin' by my side!"
Den I laugh all to myse'f-like, ez I swipe de twangin'
strings
An' shet my eyes in sweetest dreams o' you,—
Fer you're my heart's own music dat forever beats
an' sings—
My soul's own serenade—my Sadie Sue!

Chorus

Den wake, my colored blonde with eyes o' blue,
An' lips ez red ez roses renshed with dew;
Yo' hair ez fair an' fine
Ez de skeins o' June sunshine,
My little, light-complected Sadie Sue!

2

CHUCK'S HOODOOS

Chuck's allus had de Hoodoos bad!—
Do what he kin to lose 'em,
Dey track dat coon, by sun er moon,
Des like dey cain't uxcuse 'im!
An' more he gyaurd 'em off, more hard
Hit 'pear-like dat they press 'im—
De onliest luck dey 'low ole Chuck
Is dis enough to 'stress 'im!

He taken care—no matter where
He's walkin' 'long de street an'
See any ladder leanin' there,
Er cross-eyed man he's meetin'—
Dat eye o' his ketch wher' dey is,
An', quick as "scat," Chuck's hittin'
De curb outside, an' watch wile-eyed
Fust lef'-han' place to spit in!

He' got toenails o' bats; an' snails
  Shet hot in deir shell-houses
Wid sealin'-wax; an' little backs
  O' turkles in his trouse's:
A moleskin-pu's'; an' possum's han'—
  Des ever' charm an' wonder—
An' barber-chair o' shore hosshair—
  An' hoss-shoe hangin' under!

"An' yit," says Chuck, "I got no luck:—
  De Hoodoos still a-bafflin'
Dis po' ole saint what knows he ain't—
  'Twix' shootin' craps an' rafflin'!
No overcoat—ner underwear,—
  Right on de aidge o' winter
I's up aginst de wust layout
  Dey's ever got me inter!"

THE ROSE-LADY

TO THE ROSES

I DREAM that you are kisses Allah sent
In forms material, that all the earth
May taste of you and guess of Heaven's worth,
Since it can waste such sweetness with content,—
Seeing you showered o'er the Battlement—
By Angel-hands plucked ripe from lips of mirth
And flung in lavish clusters, yet no dearth
Of rapture for the Anthem! . . . I have bent
Above you, nestled in some low retreat,
Pressing your velvet mouths against the dust,
And, ever nurturing this old conceit,
Have lifted up your lips in perfect trust
Against my mouth, nor found them the less sweet
For having kissed the dust beneath my feet.

A HOOSIER CALENDAR

JANUARY

BLEAK January! Cold as fate,
And ever colder—ever keener—
Our very hair cut while we wait
By winds that clip it ever cleaner:
Cold as a miser's buried gold,
Or nether-deeps of old tradition—
Jeems January! you're a cold
Proposition!

FEBRUARY

You, February,—seem to be
Old January's understudy,
But play the part too vaudeville-y,—
With wind too moist and snow too muddy—
You overfreeze and overthaw—
Your "Hos'ler Jo"-like recitation
But hints that you're, at best, a raw
Imitation.

MARCH

And, March, you've got no friends to spare—
Warm friends, I mean—unless coal-dealers,
Or gas-well owners, pipin' where
The piper's paid—above all spielers;

You are a month, too, of complex
  Perversities beyond solution—
A sort o' "loveliest of your sex"
    Institution!

APRIL

But, April, when you kind o' come
  A-sa'nterin' down along our roadway,
The bars is down, and we're at home,
  And you're as welcome as a show-day!
First thing we know, the sunshine falls
  Spring-like, and drenches all Creation
With that-'ere ba'm the poets calls
    "Inspiration."

MAY

And May!—It's warmin' jest to see
  The crick thawed clear ag'in and dancin'—
'Pear-like it's tickled 'most as *me*
  A-prancin' 'crosst it with my pants on!
And then to hear the bluebird whet
  His old song up and lance it through you,
Clean through the boy's heart beatin' yet—
    Hallylooya!

JUNE

June—'Ll, I jest git *doped* on June!—
  The trees and grass all at their greenest—
The round earth swung 'twixt sun and moon,
  Jest at its—so to say—serenest:—

In country,—stars and whipperwills;
  In town,—all night the boys invadin'
Leadin' citizens' winder-sills,
    Sair-a-nadin'.

JULY

Fish still a-bitin'—*some;* but 'most
  Too hot fer anything but layin'
Jest do-less like, and watchin' clos't
  The treetops and the squirrels playin'—
Their tail-tips switched 'bove knot and limb,
  But keepin' most in sequestration—
Leavin' a big part to the im-
    Magination.

AUGUST

Now when it's August—I can tell
  It by a hundred signs and over;—
They is a mixed ripe-apple-smell
  And mashed-down grass and musty clover;
Bees is as lazy 'most as me—
  Bee-bird eats 'em—gap's his wings out
So lazy 'at I don't think he
    Spits their stings out!

SEPTEMBER

September, you appeal to all,
  Both young and old, lordly and lowly;
You stuff the haymow, trough and stall,
  Till horse and cow's as roly-poly

As pigs is, slopped on buttermilk
And brand, shipstuff and 'tater-peelin's—
And folks, too, feelin' fine as silk
With all their feelin's!

OCTOBER

If I'd be'n asked for my advice,
And thought the thing out, ca'm and sober—
Sizin' the months all once or twice,—
I'd la'nch'd the year out with *October*. . . .
All Nature then jest veiled and dressed
In weddin' gyarments, ornamented
With ripe-fruit-gems—and kissin' jest
New-invented!

NOVEMBER

I'm 'feared November's hopes is few
And far between!—Cold as a Monday-
Washday, er a lodge-man who
You' got to pallbear for on Sunday;
Colder and colder every day—
The fixed official time for sighin',—
A sinkin' state you jest can't stay
In, or *die* in!

DECEMBER

December—why, of course we grin
And bear it—shiverin' every minute,
Yet warm from time the month rolls in
Till it skites out with Christmas in it;

And so, for all its coldest truths
  And chill, goose-pimpled imperfections,
It wads our lank old socks with Youth's
    Recollections.

THE LITTLE WOMAN

MY little woman, of you I sing
With a fervor all divine,—
For I know the clasp of the hands that cling
So closely here in mine.

Though the rosy palms I used to press
Are faded and worn with care,
And tremulous is the old caress
That nestles in my hair,—

Your heart to me is a changeless page;
I have read it bit by bit,
From the dawn of love to the dusk of age,—
And the tale is Holy Writ.

Fold your eyes,—for the twilight bends
As a mother o'er her child—
Even as when, in the long-lost Then,
You bent o'er ours and smiled. . . .

(Nay, but I spoke all unaware!
See! I am kneeling, too,
And with mine, dear, is the rose's prayer,
With a blur of tears and dew.)

But O little woman, I often grieve,
  As I think of the vanished years
And trace the course of the cares that leave
  Your features dim with tears:

I often grieve, for the frowns I wore
  When the world seemed all untrue,—
When my hard, proud heart was sick and
      sore
  And would not come to you!

I often grieve, as I hold your hand—
  As I hold your hand to-night,—
That it takes so long to understand
  The lesson of love aright!

But sing the song that I taught you once,
  Dear little woman, as *then*
Away far back in the golden months:—
  Sing me the song again!

For, as under the stars we loved of yore
  When the nights of love were long,
Your poor, pale lips grow glad once more
  And I kiss them into song:—

My little woman's hands are fair
  As even the moonflowers be
When fairies creep in their depths and sleep
  Till the sun leaps out o' the sea.

And O her eyes, they are spheres of light—
So brighter than stars are they,
The brightest day is the darkest night
When my little woman's away.

For my little woman has ever a tear
And a sigh when I am sad;
And I have a thousand smiles for her
When my little woman is glad.

But my little woman is strong and brave,
For all of her tears and sighs,
Her stanch little heart knows how to behave
Whenever the storms arise.

My little woman, of you I sing
With a fervor all divine,—
For I know the clasp of the hands that cling
So closely here in mine.

WHAT TITLE?

WHAT title best befits the man
We hold our first American?
Or Statesman; Soldier; Hero; Chief,
Whose Country is his first belief:
Or sanest, safest Leader; or
True Patriot; or Orator,
Heard still at Inspiration's height,
Because he speaks for truth and right;
Or shall his people be content
With Our Republic's President,
Or trust his ringing worth to live
In song as Chief Executive?
Nay—his the simplest name—though set
Upon him like a coronet,—
God names our first American
The highest, noblest name—The MAN.

YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER

In the deep grave's charmèd chamber,
Lying tranced in breathless slumber,
You may haply not remember.

YOU may not remember whether
It was Spring or Summer weather;
But *I* know—we two together
At the dim end of the day—
How the fireflies in the twilight
Drifted by like flakes of starlight,
Till o'er floods of flashing moonlight
They were wave-like swept away.

You may not remember any
Word of mine of all the many
Poured out for you there, though then a
Soul inspirèd spake my love;—
But *I* knew—and still review it,
All my passion, as with awe it
Welled in speech as from a poet
Gifted of the gods above.

Sleeping here, this hour I grieve in,
You may not remember even
Any kiss I still believe in,
Or caress of ecstasy,—

May not even *dream*—O can't you?—
That I kneel here—weep here—want you—
Feign me in your grave, to haunt you,
Since you come not back to me!

Vain! ah, vain is all my yearning
As the West's last embers burning
Into ashes, slowly turning
Ever to a denser gray!—
While the fireflies in the twilight
Drift about like flakes of starlight,
Till o'er wastes of wannest moonlight
They are wave-like swept away.

THE REST

V. K.—NATURALIST

HE rests at last, as on the mother-breast
The playworn child at evening lies at rest,—
For he, a buoyant child, in veriest truth,
Has looked on life with eyes of changeless youth:—
Has loved our green old earth here from the hour
Of his first memory of bud and flower—
Of morning's grassy lawns and dewy trees
And orchard-blossoms, singing birds and bees:

When all the world about him was a land
Elysian, with the mother near at hand:
With steadfast gaze of wonder and delight
He marked the miracles of day and night:—
Beheld the kingly sun, in dazzling reign
By day; and, with her glittering, glimmering train
Of stars, he saw the queenly moon possess
Her throne in midmost midnight's mightiness.

All living least of things he ever knew
Of mother Earth's he was a brother to:
The lone rose by the brook—or, under, where
The swaying water-lilies anchored there;

His love dipped even to the glossy things
That walked the waters and forgot their wings
In sheer insanity of some delight
Known but to that ecstatic parasite.

It was enough, thus childishly to sense
All works—since worthy of Omnipotence—
As worshipful: Therefor, as any child,
He knelt in tenderness of tears, or smiled
His gratefulness, as to a playmate glad
To share His pleasures with a poorer lad.
And so he lived: And so he *died?*—Ah, no,
We'll not believe that till he tells us so.

WE MUST BELIEVE

Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief.

I

WE must believe—
Being from birth endowed with love and trust—
Born unto loving;—and how simply just
That love—that faith!—even in the blossom-face
The babe drops dreamward in its resting-place,
Intuitively conscious of the sure
Awakening to rapture ever pure
And sweet and saintly as the mother's own
Or the awed father's, as his arms are thrown
O'er wife and child, to round about them weave
And wind and bind them as one harvest-sheaf
Of love—to cleave to, and *forever* cleave. . . .
Lord, I believe:
Help Thou mine unbelief.

II

We must believe—
Impelled since infancy to seek some clear
Fulfilment, still withheld all seekers here;—
For never have we seen perfection nor
The glory we are ever seeking for:
But we *have* seen—all mortal souls as one—
Have seen its *promise,* in the morning sun—

Its blest assurance, in the stars of night;—
The ever-dawning of the dark to light;—
The tears down-falling from all eyes that grieve—
  The eyes uplifting from all deeps of grief,
Yearning for what at last we shall receive. . . .
  Lord, I believe:
    Help Thou mine unbelief.

III

We must believe:
For still all unappeased our hunger goes,
From life's first waking, to its last repose:
The briefest life of any babe, or man
Outwearing even the allotted span,
Is each a life unfinished—incomplete:
For these, then, of th' outworn, or unworn feet
Denied one toddling step—O there must be
Some fair, green, flowery pathway endlessly
Winding through lands Elysian! Lord, receive
  And lead each as Thine Own Child—even the
    Chief
Of us who didst Immortal life achieve. . . .
  Lord, I believe:
    Help Thou mine unbelief.

THE HIRED MAN'S DOG-STORY

Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame
Forgather'd ance upon a time.
—BURNS

DOGS, I contend, is jes' about
Nigh human—git 'em studied out.
I hold, like us, they've got their own
Reasonin' powers 'at's theirs alone—
Same as their tricks and habits too,
Provin', by lots o' things they do,
That instinct's not the only thing
That dogs is governed by, i jing!—
And I'll say furder, on that line,
  And prove it, that they's dogs a-plenty
Will show intelligence as fine
  As ary ten men out o' twenty!

Jevver investigate the way
Sheep-killin' dogs goes at it—hey?
Well, you dig up the facts and you
Will find, first thing, they's always *two*
Dogs goes together on that spree
O' blood and puore dog-deviltry!
And, then, they always go at night—

Mind ye, it's never in daylight,
When folks is up and wide awake,—
No self-respectin' dogs'll make
Mistakes o' judgment on that score,—
And I've knowed fifty head or more
O' slaughtered sheep found in the lot,
Next morning the old farmer got
His folks up and went out to feed,—
And every livin' soul agreed
That all night long they never heerd
The bark o' dog ner bleat o' skeered
And racin', tromplin' flock o' sheep
A-skallyhootin' roun' the pastur',
To rouse 'em from their peaceful sleep
To that heart-renderin' disaster!

Well, now, they's actchul evidence
In all these facts set forth; and hence
When, by like facts, it has been foun'
That these two dogs—colloguin' roun'
At night as thick as thieves—*by day*
Don't go together anyway,
And, 'pearantly, hain't never met
Each other; and the facts is set
On record furder, that these smart
Old pards in crime lives miles apart—
Which is a trick o' theirs, to throw
Off all suspicion, don't you know!—
One's a *town*-dog—belongin' to
Some good man, maybe—er to you!—
And one's a *country*-dog, er *"jay,"*

As you nickname us thataway.
Well, now!—these is the facts I' got
(And, mind ye, these *is* facts—not
guesses)
To argy on, concernin' what
Fine reasonin' powers dogs p'sesses.

My idy is,—the dog lives in
The *town,* we'll say, runs up ag'in
The *country*-dog, some Saturday,
Under a' old farm-wagon, say,
Down at the Court-house hitchin'-rack.—
Both lifts the bristles on their back
And show their teeth and growl as though
They meant it pleasant-like and low,
In case the fight hangs fire. And they
Both wag then in a friendly way,
The town-dog sayin':—"Seems to me,
Last Dimocratic jubilee,
I seen you here in town somewhere?"
The country-dog says:— "Right you air!—
And right here's where you seen me, too,
Under this wagon, watchin' *you!*"
"Yes," says the town-dog,—"and I thought
We'd *both* bear watchin', like as not."
And as he yawns and looks away,
The country-dog says, "What's your lay?"
The town-dog whets his feet a spell
And yawns ag'in, and then says,—"Well,
Before I answer that—Ain't you

A Mill Crick dog, a mile er two
From old Chape Clayton's stock-farm—say?"
"Who *told* you?" says the jay-dog—"hey?"
And looks up, real su'prised. *"I guessed,"*
The town-dog says—*"You* tell the rest,—
How's old Chape's mutton, anyhow?—
How many of 'em's ready now—
How many of 'em's ripe enough fer use,
And how's the hot, red, rosy juice?"
"'Mm!" says the country-dog, "I think
I sort o' see a little blink
O' what you mean." And then he stops
And turns and looks up street and lops
His old wet tongue out, and says he,
Lickin' his lips, all slobbery,
"Ad-drat my melts! you're jes' my man!—
I'll trust you, 'cause I know I can!"
And then he says, "I'll tell you jes'
How things is, and Chape's carelessness
About his sheep,—fer instance, say,
To-morry Chapes'll all be 'way
To Sund'y-meetin'—and ag'in
At night." "At night? That lets us in!—
'Better the day' "—the town-dog says—
" 'Better the deed.' We'll pray; Lord, yes!—
May the outpourin' grace be shed
Abroad, and all hearts comforted
Accordin' to their lights!" says he,
"And that, of course, means you and me."
And then they both snarled, low and quiet—

Swore where they'd meet. And both stood
by it!
Jes' half-past eight on Sund'y night,
Them two dogs meets,—the *town*-dog, light
O' foot, though five mile' he had spanned
O' field, beech-wood and bottom-land.
But, as books says,—we draw a veil
Over this chapter of the tale! . . .
Yit when them two infernal, mean,
Low, orn'ry whelps has left the scene
O' carnage—chased and putt to death
The last pore sheep,—they've yit got breath
Enough to laugh and joke about
The fun they've had, while they sneak out
The woods-way fer the old crick where
They both plunge in and wash their hair
And rench their bloody mouths, and grin,
As each one skulks off home ag'in—
Jes' innardly too proud and glad
To keep theirselves from kind o' struttin',
Thinkin' about the fun they'd had—
When their blame wizzens needed cuttin'!

Dogs is deliber't.—They can bide
Their time till s'picions all has died.
The country-dog don't 'pear to care
Fer town no more,—he's off somewhere
When the folks whistles, as they head
The team t'ards town. As I jes' said,—
Dogs is deliber't, don't forgit!

So this-here dog he's got the grit
To jes' deprive hisse'f o' town
For 'bout three weeks. But time rolls
roun'! . . .
Same as they *first* met:—Saturday—
Same Court-house—hitch-rack—and same
way
The team wuz hitched—same wagon where
The same *jay*-dog growls under there
When same *town*-dog comes loafin' by,
With the most innocentest eye
And giner'l meek and lowly style,
As though he'd never cracked a smile
In all his mortal days!—And both
Them dogs is strangers, you'd take oath!—
Both keeps a-lookin' sharp, to see
If folks is watchin'—jes' the way
They acted that first Saturday
They talked so confidentchully.
"Well"—says the town-dog, in a low
And careless tone—"Well, whatch you
know?"
"'*Know?*'" says the country-dog—"Lots
more
Than some smart people knows—that's
shore!"
And then, in his dog-language, he
Explains how slick he had to be
When some suspicious folks come roun'
A-tryin' to track and run him down—
Like *he'd* had anything to do

With killin' over fifty head
O' sheep! "Jes' think!—and *me*"—he said,
"And me as innocent as *you,*
That very hour, five mile' away
In this town like you air to-day!"
"Ah!" says the town-dog, "there's the beauty
O' bein' *prepared* for what may be,
And *washin'* when you've done your duty!—
No stain o' blood on you er me
Ner wool in *our* teeth!—*Then,*" says he,
"When wicked man has wronged us so,
We ort to learn to be forgivin'—
Half the world, of course, don't know
How the other gits its livin'!"

PERVERSITY

YOU have more'n likely noticed,
When you *didn't* when you *could,*
That jes' the thing you *didn't* do
Was jes' the thing you *should.*

HER POET-BROTHER

OH! what ef little childerns all
  Wuz big as parunts is!
Nen I'd join pa's Masonic Hall
  An' wear gold things like his!
An' you'd "receive," like ma, an' be
  My "hostuss"—An', gee-whizz!
We'd *alluz* have ice-cream, ef we
  Wuz big as parunts is!

Wiv all the money mens is got—
  We'd buy a *Store* wiv that,—
Ist candy, pies an' cakes, an' not
  No *drygoods*—'cept a hat-
An'-plume fer *you*—an' "plug" fer me,
  An' clothes like *ma's* an' *his,*
'At on'y ist fit *us*—ef we
  Wuz big as parunts is!

An'—ef *we* had a little boy
  An' girl like me an' you,—
Our Store'd keep ever' kind o' toy
  They'd ever want us to!—

We'd hire "Old Kriss" to 'tend to be
  The boss of all the biz
An' ist *"charge"* ever'thing—ef we
  Wuz big as parunts is!

GRAMPA'S CHOICE

FIRST and best of earthly joys,
I like little girls and boys:
Which of all do I like best?
Why, the one that's happiest.

A LITTLE LAME BOY'S VIEWS

ON 'Scursion-days—an' Shows—an' Fairs—
They ain't no bad folks anywheres!—
On street-cars—same as *you*—
Seems like *some*body allus sees
I'm lame, an' takes me on their knees,
An' holds my crutches, too—
An' asts me what's my name, an' pays
My fare theirse'f—On all Big Days!

The mob all *scrowdges* you an' makes
Enough o' bluffs, fer goodness-sakes!
But none of 'em *ain't* mad—
They're only *lettin' on.—I* know;—
An' I can tell you *why* it's so:
They're all of 'em too *glad*—
They're *ever' one,* jes' glad as *me*
To be there, er they *wouldn't* be!

The man that sells the tickets snoops
My "one-er" in, but sort o' stoops
An' grins out at me—then
Looks mean an' business-like an' sucks

His big mustache at me an' chucks
Too much change out again.—
He's a *smooth citizen,* an' yit
He don't fool *me* one little bit!

An' then, *inside*—fer all the jam—
Folks, seems-like, all knows who I am,
An' tips me nods an' winks;
An' even country-folks has made
Me he'p eat pie an' marmalade,
With bottled milk fer "drinks"!—
Folks *all's* so good to me that I—
Sometimes—I nearly purt' near' *cry.*

An' all the *kids,* high-toned er pore,
Seems better than they wuz before,
An' wants to kind o' "stand
In" with a feller—see him through
The *free* lay-out an' *sideshows,* too,
An' do the bloomin' "grand"!
On 'Scursion-days—an' Shows an' Fairs—
They ain't no bad folks anywheres!

A VERY TALL BOY

THE ONE LONE LIMERICK OF UNCLE SIDNEY'S

SOME credulous chroniclers tell us
Of a very tall youngster named Ellis,
Whose Pa said, "Ma-ri-er,
If Bubb grows much higher,
He'll have to be trained up a trellis."

THE RAGGEDY MAN ON CHILDREN

CHILDERN—take 'em as they run—
You kin *bet* on, ev'ry one!—
Treat 'em right and reco'nize
Human souls is all one size.

Jevver think?—the world's best men
Wears the same souls they had when
They run barefoot—'way back where
All these little children air.

Heerd a boy, not long ago,
Say his parents *sassed* him so,
He'd *correct* 'em, ef he could,—
Then be good ef *they'd* be good.

'LIZABUTH-ANN ON BAKIN'-DAY

OUR Hired Girl, when it's bakin'-day
She's out o' patience allus,
An' tells us "Hike *outdoors* an' play,
An' when the cookies's done," she'll say,
"Land sake! she'll come an' call us!"
An' when the little doughbowl's all
Ist heapin'-full, she'll come an' call—
Nen say, "She ruther take a switchin'
Than have a pack o' pesky childern
Trackin' round the kitchen!"

GOLDIE GOODWIN

MY old Uncle Sidney *he* says it's a sign
All over the Worl', an' ten times out of nine,
He can tell by the *name* of a child ef the same
Is a good er bad youngun—ist knows by their name!—
So he says, "It's the vurry best sign in the Worl'
That *Goldie Goodwin* is a good little girl,"—
An' says, "First she's *gold*—then she's *good*—an' behold,
Good's 'bout 'leventy-*hunnerd* times *better* than *gold!*"